

19. 6. 29

SERMONS

on the
following subjects :

The christian's obligation to
every thing that is truly
good.

The necessity of settling good
principles in the heart.

Of oaths and vows.

Of sound doctrine.

The true meaning, dignity and
importance of the command,
to love God.

The second commandment like
to the first.

The folly of sloth.

The intolerable burthen of a
wounded spirit.

No reason to be ashamed of
the gospel of Christ.

A humble disposition necessary
to the reception of the gospel.

The abuse of revelation no dis-
proof of its real worth.

Eternal life the great promise
of the gospel.

The good fight of faith.

The christian's obligation to
study the gospel.

*To which is added a Latin discourse,
concerning the holiness of places.*

By JOSEPH BURROUGHS.

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SERMONS

on the

of the subjects

19. 6. 29



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S E R M O N. I.

The christian's obligation to every
thing that is truly good.

Preached at Barbican in London, Nov. 24,
1734.

PHIL. iv. 8, 9.

*Finally brethren : whatsoever things are true,
whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever
things are just, whatsoever things are pure,
whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever
things are of good report, if there be any
virtue, and if there be any praise ; think
on these things. Those things which ye have
both learned, and received, and heard, and
seen in me, do : and the God of peace shall
be with you.*

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The necessity of settling good principles in the heart.

Preached at Barbican, Jan. 4. 1735.

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songs, singing with grace in your hearts to
the Lord.*

384.



The reader is desired to make the following alterations.

Page 69. line 23. for *even hereby*, read *besides this*.
P. 112. l. 12. r. *the one of these*. P. 116. l. 5. r. *than that*. P. 135. l. 25. after *selves*, add, *nor with the high commendations of their excellency and importance, contained in many passages of scripture, particularly in the xixth and cxixth psalms*. P. 176. after l. 20. add, in a fresh paragraph: *No other than this can be the meaning of the same apostle in that parallel passage, Gal. v. 13, 14. By love serve one another: for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. All the law: that is, all that law which relates to mens conduct towards each other*. P. 223. l. 6. r. *acknowledged*. P. 273. l. 3. dele *our*. P. 328. l. 16. dele *him*, P. 353. l. 21. r. *fitting*. P. 374. l. 31. after *them*, r. *the*.

In the Latin discourse.

Page x. line 29. for $\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ r. $\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\rho$. P. xvi. l. 8. after *esset*, r. *omnia*. P. xxv. l. 16. r. *Hierosolymis*. P. xxvii. l. 7. r. *hunc*.



S E R M O N I.

The christian's obligation to every thing that is truly good.

PHIL. iv. 8, 9.

Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise; think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.



HIS text contains a recommendation of very important duties. And the manner in which they are recommended is an earnest exhortation to the *Philippian* christians, to make them the
B subject

SERM. subject of their diligent *study*, and to form
 I. them into their *practice*; enforced by the
 ~~~~~ assurance, that *the God of peace would be*  
*with them* if they did thus study and prac-  
 tise; and by the remembrance, that these  
 duties were *what they had learned, and re-*  
*ceived, and heard* from the apostle in his  
 doctrine, and *had seen* exemplified in his  
 conversation.

THIS would more plainly appear to  
 be the form, in which the apostle recom-  
 mends the duties specified, if his words in  
*ver. 9.* were translated more agreeably to  
 the original. For there the connection  
 stands thus. *Whatsoever things are true,*  
*whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever*  
*things are just, whatsoever things are pure,*  
*whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever*  
*things are of good report, if there be any*  
*virtue, and if there be any praise: think on*  
*these things; which also ye have learned and*  
*received, and heard and seen in me: practise*  
*these things: and the God of peace shall be*  
*with you.*<sup>a</sup>

FROM this account of the words it  
 appears: that *the things which the Philip-*

<sup>a</sup> Ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνὰ, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἄγνα,  
 ὅσα προσφιλῆ, ὅσα ἔυφημα, εἴ τις ἀρετὴ, καὶ εἴ τις ἑται-  
 ρος ταῦτα λογίζεσθε, ἃ καὶ ἐμάθετε, καὶ παρελάβετε,  
 καὶ ἤκούσατε, καὶ εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοί· ταῦτα πράσσετε καὶ ὁ  
 Θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν.

*every thing that is truly good.*

3

prians *had learned and received, and heard* S E R M.  
*and seen* in the apostle Paul, are those I.

very things, which he particularly specifies and most earnestly recommends: and that he did not mean to exhort the *Philippians* to *practise* any thing, which they had *seen* personally in him, or *heard and learned from him*, and at the same time only *think upon* whatsoever things were *true, and honourable, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report*. It would be highly injurious to the apostle, to suspect him of such a design. They are the same things, which he exhorts these christians *to think upon*, and *to practise*, under the encouraging promise of *God's presence*. And what he thus recommends to them are the very things, which he reminds them *they had learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him*; which they had entertained by means of his ministry, and seen to be practicable by his example; and therefore were under the stronger obligation, both to reflect upon them, and to put them in practice.

It deserves further to be remarked; that the word which we render *think upon*, signifies *arguing or reasoning*, and sometimes *reckoning and concluding*, after a train of considerations. The instances in the new testament, wherein it is used in these senses,

<sup>b</sup> λογίζομαι.

B 2

are



S E R M. are too numerous to be now produced <sup>c</sup>. I

I. shall only observe, from the nature of the things spoken of in the text, that the word is employed there with so evident a view to *practice*, that the apostle cannot be supposed to have exhorted the *Philippian* christians merely to exercise their speculations upon such a set of duties as he there recommends : and that when he bids them *study* and *think upon* the things, which in the same breath he exhorts them to *practise*, he must mean they should so *think* and *reckon upon* them, as to account them their incumbent duties. This he does in such a large and universal manner, as to let them know, they must never allow themselves in any case to decline or swerve from them. He does not say in an indefinite manner, ' think of truth, think of honour, and justice, and purity, and the like : ' but, *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, &c. think on these things, and practise these things.*

AND it is worth our while to observe how the exhortation is connected with what goes before ; that we may see the apostle knew very well what he was doing, while he recommended to christians, con-

<sup>c</sup> For a specimen, see the following texts. Mar. xi. 31. Rom. ii. 3. iii. 28. vi. 11. viii. 18. 2 Cor. xi. 5. Phil. iii. 13. Hebr. ii. 19.

*every thing that is truly good.*

5

sidered as christians, this train of moral virtues, and laid a stress upon them as indispensably required. A great part of the epistle had been taken up in recommending to the *Philippians* a steady adherence to the christian religion, and in warning them against the delusions of those, who would persuade them to reject it, or to mingle Judaism with it, representing it as a scheme imperfect in itself. S E R M. I.

AFTER much discourse to this purpose in the third chapter, the apostle exhorts the *Philippians*, in the beginning of the fourth, *to stand fast in the Lord*, and *to rejoice in the Lord*. Which exhortations, considering the afflicted condition the apostle knew them to be in, plainly signify, that there were sufficient reasons, not only for persevering in their christian profession, but likewise for glorying in it, notwithstanding the<sup>d</sup> persecution they suffered for its sake. The exhortation in *ver. 6.* is suited to the same suffering condition; being attended with proper instructions for their behaviour under it, and with an assurance, in *ver. 7.* that they would find it their interest to follow these instructions. *Be not anxiously solicitous for any thing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made*

<sup>d</sup> See chap. i. ver. 29.

SERM. *known unto God : and the peace of God,*

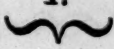
I. *which passeth all understanding, shall keep  
your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.*

Now these last words plainly shew, that the instructions and consolations which the apostle had been giving, he had given to this people considered as christians. And 'tis immediately with these words that our text is connected : *Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, &c. think of and practise these things, &c. and the God of peace shall be with you.* By which connexion the apostle signifies :

‘ that having given them those directions,  
‘ which more especially suited their present state, as solicited by seducers to corrupt their christianity, and by persecution  
‘ tempted to lay down the profession of it ;  
‘ *for the rest,*’ (and that is the proper meaning of the words τὸ λοιπόν) ‘ all that he  
‘ had to desire of them was, that they  
‘ would bear in mind their unalterable obligation to those things which are good  
‘ in their own nature, resulting from the  
‘ relation wherein God has placed men to  
‘ himself and to each other ; the practice  
‘ whereof would, according to its genuine  
‘ tendency, supply them with that cheerfulness and vigour, and give them that  
‘ joyful sense of divine approbation, which  
‘ would support them under all their sufferings.’ These things indeed he only just  
mentions ;

*every thing that is truly good.*

7

mentions ; the immediate occasion of the S E R M.  
epistle having, as it ought to do, taken up I.  
the greatest part of it. However he could   
not take leave, without putting them in  
mind, that these duties are as necessary to  
be practised by christians as by any other ;  
and as necessary likewise to be practised by  
christians in their condition, as by those  
who enjoy the most profound peace.

THE importance of the end, at which  
the apostle aims in my text, must be my  
apology for spending so much time upon  
the manner of his address. Let us now  
distinctly consider the duties themselves  
which he recommends.

I. THE apostle intreats the christians to  
whom he writes, that they would *think*  
*of whatsoever things are true*, and *reckon*  
*upon it* as their incumbent duty to *prac-*  
*tise* such things. In which words 'tis plain  
he recommends an undisguised sincerity in  
the whole conduct towards God and men.  
He signifies ; that all our professions of re-  
spect to God, whether they be made by  
words or actions, should be such as pro-  
ceed from and are agreeable to the in-  
ward sense of our minds ; that we should  
retain all that reverent sense of the divine  
being, all that humble submission to the  
wisdom and authority of his government,

ἡ ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ.

B 4

all



SERM. all that willing conformity to the holiness

I. of his precepts, and all that hearty thankfulness for the manifestations of his love, which we at any time express, either in our immediate addresses to him, or in our converse with men. With regard to men ; *the practising whatsoever things are true* includes the care to avoid imposing upon them in any thing that may turn to their prejudice, and the conversing with them in such a manner, as that they may safely depend upon what they hear us affirm or promise, or what the course of our actions visibly tends to. And in general, it includes that steadiness of mind, which will not suffer us to be influenced by the views of profit, or pleasure, or power, on the one side, or by the fears of disgrace, or pain, or poverty, on the other, to do what is contrary to the dictates of conscience.

2 Cor. i.  
12.

THE apostle recommends that *simplicity and godly sincerity* to his fellow-christians, the reflexion upon which in his own conduct made him elsewhere say ; *This is our rejoicing, even the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* In exhorting his brethren to *reckon upon whatsoever things are true*, he exhorts them to dare to be true in the most difficult cases, as well as where there is no temptation

*every thing that is truly good.*

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temptation to the contrary: he signifies, S E R M.  
that all the most plausible pretensions to re- I.

ligion are to no purpose without this virtue: he warns against any course of action, which may be the means of breeding a habit of insincerity; which is the worst of mischiefs that can befall us, as it leaves us destitute of hope to be reclaimed to any thing that is good. In the same few words therefore he includes all that can be said concerning the folly of insincerity. Which is indeed the greatest folly in the world: because, though we should deceive men, or they should not be able to call us to account, and in case moreover we ourselves should be so hardened as to have no regard to their reproaches: yet we cannot deceive God, who inspects our hearts as well as our actions; that God, to whom we must give account of our whole conduct, in the day of retribution: besides that in the nature of things the hypocrite must of course be miserable by the reflexions of his own mind; though 'tis certain his misery will be dreadfully increased, when by the process of the last day his hypocrisy comes to be thoroughly detected, and when all those pleasing enjoinders, for the sake of which he acted contrary to his convictions and professions, are for ever removed from him.

THE

SERM. THE substance of all these things is included in the apostle's exhorting christians, considered as christians, to *reckon upon, and to practise whatsoever things are true*. He did not, it seems, think it at all foreign from his own business, as a minister of Christ's gospel, or inconsistent with the thought of his writing to a christian church, to exhort every member of it to be *true hearted*, and free from all hypocrisy, in the whole course of their actions; so to behave themselves, as to be able to stand the test of their own cool reflexions. Indeed, herein he acted the part of a faithful minister of Christ. For it cannot be denied, that the guilt of insincerity is prodigiously enhanced under the dispensation of the gospel; because that dispensation gives such clear light into the nature and reason of our duty, both towards God and men, and the strongest assurances, that God, who inspects our hearts and actions at present, will hereafter call us into judgment; and particularly, that *he will judge the secrets of our hearts by Jesus Christ*; having constituted him to be our future judge and rewarder, by whom he made known the whole of his counsel, relating to our duty and happiness.

LET this therefore be remembered before all other things: that how plausible soever are our professions of respect to God,  
and

*every thing that is truly good.*

II

and of benevolence to men ; if we have not SERM.  
sincerely an eye to his glory and their good, I.  
and do not from our very hearts pursue  
those measures which we believe have a  
tendency to such purposes, we contradict  
the design of christianity, and our profes-  
sion will finally become our condemnation.

II. THE apostle intreats his brethren to  
*reckon upon* as their duty *whatsoever things*  
*are honest*. The original word, *σεμνὰ*,  
might very well have been rendered *de-*  
*cent*, or *venerable* ; and does, according to  
its general use, in several passages in the new  
testament, signify what goes in our lan-  
guage by the name of *gravity*, in opposi-  
tion to a vain and light frame of mind.  
Thus, in the use of this same word, the  
apostle recommends *gravity* as one proper  
part of the character of officers in the chri-  
stian church, in his epistles to *Timothy* 1 Tim. iii.  
and *Titus*. Now, that *gravity* which 4, 8, 11.  
was required in a special manner to Tit. ii. 7.  
adorn the character of such as were cal-  
led to public offices in the church, the  
apostle, in our text, shews to be expected  
from every christian ; and what he ought  
to *reckon upon* as his duty, considered as  
a christian. He plainly signifies, that  
the frame of mind, and the conversation  
influenced by it, should be in some mea-  
sure suited to the great importance of that  
divine



SERM. divine message which the gospel contains;

I. that we should banish all unseasonable levity, and in our general conduct so behave ourselves, as to deserve respect from those with whom we converse.

THERE is nothing in all this, that tends to discourage a chearful frame of spirit. And chearfulness is so far from being a crime in a true christian, that it is indeed his duty to preserve it, and to discover it in his conversation: nor is there any thing in the world which can give so rational an occasion of joy as the gospel of Christ. Accordingly, in the 4th verse of this chapter, as has been already observed, the apostle thus exhorts the *Philippians*, notwithstanding their persecuted condition; *Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say unto you, rejoice.* And in like manner he exhorts the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thess.* v. 6. *Rejoice evermore.* But there is a vast difference between that chearfulness of spirit, which arises from a thankful reflexion upon divine love, and the corrupt, pernicious levity of vain and carnal minds, delighted only with the things of this world. Otherwise we should not find this apostle so often warning the christians to whom he wrote, against such a frame of spirit; exhorting them *not to be deceived*, and assuring them that *evil communication corrupts good manners*; as he expresses himself, 1 *Cor.*

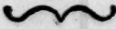
*every thing that is truly good.*

13

xv. 33. Which exhortation, we may ob- SERM.  
serve, was designed as a warning to the I.  
*Corinthian* christians, against those who  
were so carnally minded as to say, *Let us*  
*eat and drink, for to morrow we die*; ver. 32.  
Even such a warning as this, we see, the  
apostle in our text did not think unneces-  
sary or unfitting to make to a christian  
church, when he was delivering to them  
his last exhortations. Which may be of  
use, especially to the younger christians in  
our days, and indeed to us all; that we  
may *let our conversation be* in this respect  
*as becomes the gospel of Christ.*

III. THE apostle intreats the *Philippian*  
christians to *reckon upon whatsoever things*  
*are just*. Justice, it seems, did, in his opi-  
nion, deserve a particular mention; though  
it is included in the general notion of *truth*  
or *sincerity*, which had been mentioned be-  
fore. It signifies uprightness of dealing be-  
tween man and man; rendring to every  
one what of right belongs to him, with-  
out over-reaching or taking advantage of  
our neighbour's ignorance or want of power  
to redress an injury, offered to his person,  
his substance, or his reputation. Now the  
apostle's leaving this as a particular charge  
to a christian church shews, that he looked  
upon the rendring to every man his due  
as one of the grand things, which God, in  
the

SERM. the dispensation of the gospel requires of us;

I.  the breach of which precept is a most daring affront to his goodness therein display'd, and to the command of *loving our neighbour as ourselves*; which command our Saviour sufficiently explained, when he directed his disciples *to do unto others whatsoever they would that they should do unto them*, Mat. vii. 12. compared with chap. xxii. 39. The apostle well understood his master's mind. And he was perfectly consistent with himself, in exhorting the *Philippian* christians to the practice of *justice*, as well as of other duties. For, besides the like exhortations in his epistles to other churches, (particularly to the *Thessalonians*, I. iv. 6.) in his instructions to *Titus* the evangelist, he assured him, that *the grace of God, which is salutary to all, was made manifest with the very design of teaching us, that we should live righteously, as well as soberly and godlily, in this present world*. And it is certainly very fitting, that christians should be told of their duty in this respect: lest for want of it men of covetous tempers should be ready to think, that the grace of the gospel would indulge them in over-reaching practices against their neighbours; whereas the gospel abominates all such measures, and instead of allowing us in any course of injustice, requires of us offices of mutual kindness, which is  
more

Tit. ii. 11,  
12.

*every thing that is truly good.*

15

more than can be included in meer justice, SERM.  
strictly speaking.

I

IV. THE apostle exhorts these christians to *reckon upon whatsoever things are pure.* Whereby he recommends all those things which are most agreeable to chastity and temperance; the avoiding all manner of irregularity or excess in our sensual enjoyments; and as the foundation of our security herein, the guarding against impure desires in our minds. The same things are recommended by our Saviour in his sermon from the mount, *Mat. v. 27--30.* where he guards against the breach of a moral precept, not only in the external action, but in the inward principle; and advises even to the *cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye*, that is, the denying ourselves in those things which are most dear to us, rather than suffer them to hinder us in our way towards heaven. And to the like purpose is the account which he gave to his disciples, of *what it is which defiles a man*, *Mat. xv. 11, 18, 19, 20.* There are many instructions of the same kind in the writings of the apostles. Among which those are particularly to be regarded, wherein this same apostle *Paul* exhorted christians to consider *their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost*, which therefore must not be defiled or profaned; as *1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.*



SERM. iii. 16, 17. There was need, it seems, even

I. in those days, when the evidences for the truth of the christian doctrine were so fresh in memory, to use exhortations to this purpose : and would to God there was no occasion for the same now.

LET it therefore be remembred ; that this is one part of the charge of an inspired apostle to a christian church ; that how holy soever we may think ourselves to be, we may not count it needless to watch against irregularity and excess in sensual enjoiments. 'Tis properly to these that the original word ἀγνὰ refers.

I SHALL only add, with regard to every defilement, the words of the apostle, 1 *John* iii. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, (the hope of the sons of God) purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

V. *Whatsoever things are lovely, ὅσα ἀγαπᾷ, these things likewise the apostle earnestly recommends to be thought on and practised, by the same persons, whom he exhorts to stand fast in the Lord, and to rejoice in him ; things grateful and friendly ; such as naturally tend to gain the love of those with whom we converse ; all those things, wherein we may gratifie and please our neighbours, without offending God, or wounding our own consciences. This requires, that there be no moroseness in our manners ;*

manners, no desire of giving offence, or SERM.  
pleasure in it afterwards ; that there be a I.  
humble, sweet, and affable behaviour, with  
gentleness and meekness, and such as may  
promote benevolence and friendship ; a rea-  
diness to follow all those measures which  
tend to establish peace among men, and  
particularly among christians, upon a good  
and solid foundation.

MOREOVER, if we would practise *what-  
soever things are lovely*, we must be ready  
to exercise kindness where there are some  
provocations to the contrary. 'Tis *lovely*  
to bear with the weaknesses and misappre-  
hensions of our neighbours. 'Tis a proof  
that the principle of *love* abounds within  
us : and yet 'tis no more than we are obliged  
to practise, because we desire our neigh-  
bours should bear with us. 'Tis still more  
*lovely* to bear with patience their ill conduct  
towards us ; as this is a more difficult task,  
especially considering the high opinion most  
men entertain of their own merit. But  
most of all *lovely* is it to be ready to return  
a good office for a bad one ; to *overcome  
evil with good*. This is *lovely* indeed : this  
practice, conducted with prudence, tends,  
above all others, to conciliate a grateful  
affection, and to banish enmity out of the  
world. And such is the perfection of the  
gospel dispensation, as to require that of us,  
which is so agreeable to the dignity of our  
C nature,

SERM. nature, and which gives us the greatest

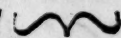
I. likeness to our heavenly Father, *who is kind to the unthankful and the evil.*

LET us therefore remember : that even the highest and noblest exercise of *love*, and that which will give us the greatest superiority over such as offend against us, is by our blessed Saviour expected and required of us : that whereas some have been taught to *love their friends*, and to *hate their enemies* ; Christ's own express words are : *I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven ; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* Mat. v. 44, 45. And if this highest exercise of *love* is required of us, 'tis certain we cannot be excused from instances of a lower and less difficult kind.

I SHALL conclude this head with quoting a few passages, wherein the apostle, who in our text exhorts the *Philippians* to the practice of *every thing that is lovely*, gives the highest encomiums to the principle from which such a practice must proceed : only observing, that in all these passages, what our translation calls *charity*, in the original signifies *love*, and ought to have been so translated. He tells the *Corinthians*,

*every thing that is truly good.*

19

1 Cor. xiii. 13. that now abideth faith, hope, SERM.  
love; these three; but the greatest of these I.  
is love. He exhorts the Colossians, above all   
things to put on love, which is the bond of  
perfectness, Col. iii. 14. And he assures  
Timothy, that the very end of the command-  
ment is love, out of a pure heart, and a  
good conscience, and faith unfeigned, 1 Tim.  
i. 5.

VI. THE apostle exhorts the *Philippian*  
christians, to think upon and to practise what-  
soever things are <sup>c</sup> of good report. Which  
words, taken in their largest sense, would  
include all the particulars already mention-  
ed, and whatever else is universally acknow-  
ledged to be good and honourable. But  
considering what goes before, the apostle  
seems, in this place, to have a more spe-  
cial view to the necessary means of keeping  
up the credit of goodness and good men,  
in cases which afford a difficult trial of true  
virtue. He seems to have his eye to that  
hard condition of virtue in this world,  
whereby it comes to pass, that great self-  
denial is necessary in good men, to keep up  
their own reputation, and that of their  
principles. And it cannot be denied, that  
it requires much of that serious *thinking*,  
recommended by the apostle, much of dis-

<sup>c</sup> εὐφημία.



SERM. cation, to perceive, in some cases, what

I. self-denial is proper; and sublime virtue,  
 ~~~~~ to practise it when discerned.

IN attending therefore to this part of the apostle's advice, *thinking upon and practising whatever things are of good report*, christians may possibly find themselves obliged sometimes to condescend to their weak brethren, and not to assert to the utmost, and upon every occasion, their christian liberty. Compare what the same apostle says to the *Romans*, xiv. 16. *Let not your good be evil spoken of.* The consideration of this rule may likewise be of use, to prevent strife and contention; a thing very often unreputable, especially in some, and very apt to bring reproch upon men and their principles, even while they are demanding their own right. See *1 Cor.* vi. 5, 6, 7. and *Gen.* xiii. 8.

THE apostle proceeds to say,

VII. *If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of, or reckon upon, these things.* In which words he either refers to the things he had been recommending before; conjuring the *Philippians*, by all the regard they had to what is *good in itself*, and by the belief they entertained, that a *virtuous* course of action is really *praise-worthy*, to attend to those things: or else he desires of them, that *if there be any*

every thing that is truly good.

21

any other *virtue*, or any other thing *praise-worthy*, which he had not particularly mentioned, they would *reckon* it to be their *duty*, and follow it in their *practice*, besides those things which he had specified.

SERM.

I.

AND if the apostle did call upon the *Philippians* to consider in general, that there is such a thing as *virtue*, that there are things in themselves *praise-worthy*; if he did call upon them to study the eternal and necessary difference between good and evil, besides recommending particular virtues; he did not do any thing unbecoming a christian minister. 'Tis certain, that such advice may be very useful to the christians of the present day, when assaulted by men who ridicule the very notion of virtue; affirming that there is no such thing, that it has no existence but only in superstitious brains, and that every man, let him pretend what he will, is always guided only by his affections. This is indeed laying the axe to the root of all religion: for at this rate there is no room for the command, *to love our neighbour*, or even *to love God himself*; since, for any thing of reality in virtue or piety, it becomes us as well to hate the divine being, and to hate our neighbour, as to love them. The apostle, it seems, was not of this mind. He believed there was such a thing as *virtue*; and that virtue *deserveth praise*; that it is

C 3

truly

SERM. truly excellent and commendable, and that

I. vice is really and justly hateful. No wonder therefore, if he intreated the *Philippians* to confirm themselves in the belief of these things; and to *reckon* themselves obliged, as christians, to *practise* what is really *praise-worthy*, and carefully to avoid the contrary.

'TIS certain, that the christian religion, in which the apostle had been just before exhorting these *Philippians* to *stand fast*, and to *rejoice*, is built upon these principles; upon the firm belief, that some things are really good, and others really evil. This appears very plainly, from many passages, where Christ himself, the author of our religion, expressly speaks of what is *good* and what is *evil*, in a way of appeal to the judgment and conscience of his hearers, and from the great stress which he constantly laid upon following that which is good, and avoiding that which is evil.

DIRECTLY to this purpose are those words of his to the *Pharisees*, Mat. xii. 33, 35. *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*

To the same purpose are those words, Mat. xix. 17, 18, 19. where, in answer to
the

every thing that is truly good.

23

the question, *What good thing shall I do that* S E R M.
I may have eternal life, our Lord recom- I.

mends the moral precepts, of *honouring parents*, of avoiding any injury to our neighbours, and in general, of *loving our neighbour as ourselves*. These he makes to be *good things* : and to these, (always including *the love of God*, as the true principle from which these *good things* should proceed) he annexes the promise of *eternal life*.

To the same purpose is the appeal to the superstitious *Jews*, Mark iii. 4. *Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-day, or to do evil?* With regard to which words I would ask : Did our Lord expect to be understood, or not ? Did he not here appeal to the natural notions even of those, whose judgments he saw to be obscured and darkened by superstition ? Did he not by this question shew, that even so dangerous a delusion as superstition itself was not able quite to efface the natural notions men have, of the difference between good and evil ?

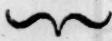
AND to the same purpose, very remarkably, is that denunciation, which our Lord, in his sermon from the mount, declared he would make in the great day against those, who made a plausible profession of godliness, but did not act agreeably to it ; Mat. vii. 23. *Then will I profess unto them ;*

C 4

I

SERM. *I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that*

I. *work iniquity.*



AND indeed, what can be the meaning of all those other passages, in the course of Christ's ministry, which contain excitations or encouragements to a holy life, and warnings against the contrary ? What else can they mean, than appeals to the consciences of men, who well enough knew what he intended thereby ? Particularly, what can be meant by the many representations of a future judgment, turning upon the good or evil conduct of men in this life ? Did not our Lord manifestly take for granted, that his hearers were sensible of the difference between good and evil, when he assured them, *Mat. xiii. 41, 42, 43. So shall it be in the end of this world : the Son of man shall send forth his angels ; and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.*

THESE things I mention thus particularly, that we may see our Saviour built his doctrine upon the foundation of the natural and necessary difference between good and evil ; and indeed that he made this a considerable part of his doctrine itself.

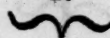
THE

THE apostle therefore had a good foun- SERM.
dation, from the express doctrine of his II.
lord and master, to put the *Philippians* in
mind ; that there is such a thing as *virtue* ;
that there are things really *praise-worthy* ;
and that christians, considered as christians,
are obliged to *reckon upon* such things as
their duty, and to *practise* accordingly.

THE proper use to be made of what
we have been hearing is ; thence to infer
the real internal goodness of the christian
religion, which insists upon so steady and
constant a regard to things good in their
own nature, making them essential parts
of a christian's character ; and to take care,
that we ourselves maintain this character.

If the apostle understood the christian
religion, and did not misrepresent it, the
religion itself must be internally good. If
christians must *reckon upon*, as their duty,
whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things
are honest, whatsoever things are just, what-
soever things are pure, whatsoever things are
lovely, whatsoever things are of good report,
and finally, *whatsoever things are virtuous*
and praise-worthy ; if they must *practise*
these things, because they have *received and*
learned them, as parts of the christian reli-
gion : then that religion must certainly be
from God. So holy a religion could ne-
ver come from an evil spirit, bent upon de-

SERM. deluding men to their own ruin. It is ut-

I. terly inconsistent with the interest of the devil's kingdom, to teach and recommend such things as these, and to require a constant regard to them. An evil spirit may possibly recommend a single good action or two, for the sake of serving a turn : nay it may advise the putting on the appearance of godliness in many respects, and the keeping on the mask continually, for the sake of carrying on some wicked design. But it can never recommend that steady regard to inward truth and sincerity, that honour, that justice, that purity, that friendly disposition, that universal virtue and goodness, which our text insists on as the christian's character. If the apostle is right, in requiring a christian to *reckon upon* all these things as his duty, and to *practise* invariably whatsoever is of this kind : then the religion of a christian must be clear from every spot and blemish ; and the closer he keeps to its directions, the more perfect must he be in every thing that is good, and the more like to that God from whom the religion itself proceeds ; and consequently he will have that interest in his favour, which it is impossible the people of the contrary character should ever enjoy.

LET us therefore remember ; that the religion we profess lays a special obligation upon

every thing that is truly good.

27

upon us to practise the same duties, to SERM.
which we are obliged by the frame of I.
our nature, and by the relations we bear ~~~~~
to God, and to the subjects of his govern-
ment: and let us practise accordingly. Let
us remember, that *because* we are christi-
ans, *therefore* we are obliged to be true and
faithful both to God and men; to behave
with gravity and decency; to practise ju-
stice and righteousness, sobriety and self-
denial; to be kind and benevolent;
and in general, to follow after all those
things, which are good in themselves, and
which challenge an universal esteem in the
minds of men. Let us remember, that
these are duties, from which, either as
men or as christians, we can never be ex-
cused. And finally, let us remember the
good encouragement we have to be found
in the practise of them. *These things do:*
and the God of peace shall be with you;
maintaining a habit of joy and satisfaction
within you in the general course of your
lives; and in particular supporting you
under every affliction, with which in the
wisdom of his providence he may think
fit to try you.



SER-



S E R M O N II.

Of the necessity of settling good principles in the heart.

MATTH. xii. 33--37.

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak,

Speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

THESE words of our Saviour follow very properly after the discovery which the *Pharisees* had made, in the preceding verses, of the rancour of their hearts, by the blasphemy of their tongues: and are a proper warning against the danger of all kinds of evil-speaking, and a wholesome advice to guard against that danger, by avoiding every evil principle in the heart; which, if entertained, will sometime or other discover itself in the conversation. The *Pharisees* could never have uttered against our blessed Lord so malicious a falsehood, as that *he cast out dæmons by Beelzebub the prince of dæmons*, if they had not entertained and encouraged in their hearts a malicious prejudice against him, and stifled that light, which would have enabled them to see that he wrought his miracles by the power of the divine Spirit. It was inconsistent with their worldly interest, their riches and grandeur, their reputation and power, to acknowledge, that the doctrine of Christ was really from above, as his miracles and the nature of the

SERM.

II.

SERM. the doctrine itself testified it to be. And

II. they being resolved at any rate to maintain their own authority, and not able any other way to reproach our Saviour among the people, than by venting a malicious falsehood, against the light of their own minds, would rather bring this complicated guilt upon themselves, than give way to the strongest methods of conviction; and hereby became guilty of that blasphemy, which is the subject of the preceding paragraph. What they spoke with their tongues was the natural effect of the wickedness of their hearts: and this observation is the occasion of the variety of particulars contained in the text. Wherein our Lord takes notice,

I. OF the high importance of fixing good principles in the heart, if ever we would hope for a good course of life and action.

II. THAT the course of life and action will discover what is the prevailing principle of the heart, and will make it known to the world.

III. THAT the train of thoughts, in which we delight, will betray itself in our speech, as well as in our general course of action; so that it will be known, by the tendency of our conversation in this respect, whether we are good or evil.

IV. THAT it is of high importance that we set a watch upon our tongues; because

cause we must give account, in the day of S E R M.
judgment, of every thing we say, as well II.
as every thing we do; and shall be justi-
fied or condemned, according as it shall
appear, that we have chosen a sober and
useful, or an idle and hurtful method of
conversing.

IT may be useful to enlarge a little under each of these heads; and to put christians in mind, that this is the doctrine, and these the observations of Christ himself, their lord and master, who is hereafter to be their judge, and by his decision to determine their future happiness or misery.

I. OUR Lord takes notice of the high importance of fixing good principles in the heart, if ever we would hope for a good course of life and action.

A MORE apt similitude could not have been chosen, than that by which our Lord illustrates this truth. Tis that of *a tree*; which is certainly *known by its fruit*, to be either *good* or *bad*. The illustration is fetched from nature itself; which is uniform in its course, and will not vary for answering any private ends or designs. It is, it seems, as certain, that a good man will, in the prevailing course of his life, do those things which are really good, and an ill man, whose heart is naught, will in his prevailing course do those things which
are

SERM. are evil; as that the fruit of a *good tree*

II. will be good, and the fruit of a *corrupt tree*, whose juices are vitiated, will be *bad*.

Our Lord does not say, that no good man will ever once in his life be able to do an ill thing, or an ill man ever once be able to do a good thing. But still, this is agreeable to his similitude. For a good tree may in some parts of it be hurt by external violence; or may, by some unhappy influence or other, bring forth now and then an ill fruit, in some parts of it; while yet the substance of it remains sound, and accordingly produces well: and yet, if the same tree comes to be thoroughly vitiated, so as to produce ill fruit upon the whole, it then loses the character of a *good tree*.

And so on the other side: a tree may now and then produce a good fruit, by the help of some favourable circumstance or other, while yet the generality of its fruit is like itself, stark naught: and the same tree, if there be any way found effectual for restoring its juices from bad to good, ceases to be an *evil tree*, becomes a *good one*, and will of course produce *good fruit*. Yet all this while it appears; that so long as the *tree* remains *good*, it will in the course of nature produce *good fruit*, and not *evil*; and so long as the tree remains *evil*, it will in the course of nature produce *evil fruit*, and not *good*.

JUST

JUST in the same manner, our Lord aff- SERM.
fures us, that according to the prevailing II.
principles in our hearts, we ourselves shall
be either good or evil ; and the fruits we
produce in the course of our conversation
will likewise be good or evil. It is not a
single thought or action indeed, that will
determine our character in either of these
respects. But this is certain : that if there
be not good resolutions fixed and establish'd
in our hearts, as the principle of action ; if
there is not in us a steady resolution to fol-
low after those things which are truly good,
and a love of those things, an inward af-
fection to them, and a hatred and contempt
of evil in all its flattering appearances : our
course of action must necessarily be bad up-
on upon the whole, notwithstanding any
single good actions we may perform. In
the nature of things it cannot be otherwise.
It can no more be otherwise, than that a
good tree can uniformly produce *corrupt*
fruit, or a *corrupt tree* good fruit.

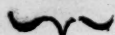
IT will be exceedingly for the advantage
of all professed christians, to remember this
observation of their lord and master, and to
consider how well it is founded. It may be
the happy means of making them seriously
enquire, what establishment they themselves
have attained in those things which are real-
ly good ; or whether the good principles
which have been recommended to them

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from

SERM.

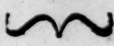
II.



from their Saviour's doctrine are only fluctuating and not settled within them; whether they are in some good measure fortified against the difficulties of a state of trial; or whether their case is such, that they have no strength of resolution, no steadiness, or fitness to resist a temptation, no inward security against the dangers to which they are exposed. It will be of great service, I say, to remember, that our Lord fetches, from the steady and uniform course of nature itself, the importance and necessity of fixing good principles in our hearts, if we would hope to lead good lives, such as he himself shall approve.

THIS doctrine does not at all infringe upon the certainty, that the aids of the divine spirit will attend those, who are faithful in the discharge of their duty; that God will succour his servants in cases of difficulty, and make his strength known in their weakness; and especially that they who sincerely desire and seek his aid shall find it. Notwithstanding the truth and the certainty of all these things, it seems, it is as certain, from the doctrine of our blessed Lord himself; that if there be not sound principles of religion and virtue well fixed and established in the heart, the life will not be religious or virtuous, but the contrary; and that if these principles be firmly established, the tenor of the actions will be agreeable thereto.

II. OUR

II. OUR Lord takes notice, that the course S E R M.
of life and action will discover what is the II.
prevailing principle of the heart, and will 
make it known to the world.

THIS observation is gathered from the same words as the preceding. Our Lord signifies, that the *tree is known by its fruits*, as well as that *a good tree brings forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree corrupt fruit*. Yet it was proper first to consider the certainty of the thing itself, that we might weigh the importance of it in our own minds, before the meer views of a discovery to the world. However it is worth our while to revolve this thought in our minds; that the goodness or the badness of our inward principles will of course discover itself by the tenour of our actions; and that with all the art we can use we shall not be able to hide it. Whether our neighbours are so free as to tell us their thoughts or not; they will be able to judge by the tenour of our actions, what our inward principles are. They may indeed for a while be deluded with a specious appearance of piety, where the heart is very corrupt: but the corruptness of the heart will at length break forth into such kind of evils, as will be evident proofs, that piety was only a cloak put on to hide the inward corruption.

THE malicious blasphemy of the *Pharisees*, mentioned a few verses before my text, gave a just occasion for this reflection. They

SERM. had put on a great appearance of piety ; in
 II. their *fastings and prayers*, in their scrupulous
 nicety of *tithing mint, anise, and cummin*,
 and in many other particulars which had a
 shew of honourable regard to the divine
 being ; while their real view in all this
 was only to support their credit and authority
 with the people, and they had no inward
 respect for what should appear to be the
 mind of God. If this had not been the
 case, they could not have treated our Saviour's
 miracles with such malicious contempt ; or
 blasphemed the divine Spirit by which he
 wrought them. And their openly ascribing
 to the power of the devil, what did most
 evidently appear to be wrought by the spirit
 of God, discovered to the people the rancour
 of their hearts, and shewed that they had
 not that piety towards God, which they
 pretended to, but were guided by a very
 different principle. Our Lord had made it
 evident to the people, that it was impossible
 he should have cast out *dæmons by Beelzebub*
the prince of dæmons ; and that the *Pharisees*
 themselves knew it to be impossible, at the
 same time that they maliciously cast this
 aspersiion upon him. And hereby a proof
 was given of the truth of this maxim, upon
 which I am now discoursing ; that *a tree will*
be known by its fruit ; that wickedness in
 the heart will discover itself in the life and
 conversation.

WE have indeed no other way whereby SERM.
to judge of one another, and consequently II.
whereby to know how we should treat each 

other, but our outward actions. If a man does thereby for a considerable time deceive his neighbours, putting on a continued restraint, and appearing pious, just or benevolent, while the very contrary characters do really belong to him; we are to judge of him and behave towards him, as if he was what he appears; and it is fit we should do so. But if these contrary principles do reign in the heart, they will sometime or other so break out, as to undeceive the eyes of men, when brought to a close trial and examination. And the cheat, which in the mean time is put upon the world, is still consistent with the similitude our Saviour uses, of *a good tree bringing forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree corrupt fruit, and of every tree's being known by its fruit.* For our Lord does not say, that every fruit is really good, which seems, and outwardly appears at a distance to be so. The fruit upon the tree may appear very specious and inviting, when yet upon trial, it may prove good for nothing, and thereby prove the tree itself to be of a corrupt and unprofitable kind. Just in like manner may men make a specious profession of godliness for a considerable time; and yet as soon as any thing happens, that will give a fair occasion of trying their real principles,

SERM. may discover at once the naughtiness and

II. corruption of their hearts.

~ BUT let some men hide their real character ever so long, and ever so artfully ; our Saviour's maxim, that *a tree is known by its fruit*, is exceedingly wise and useful, upon these two accounts : that among the generality of mankind, who are not very artful, and will not bear a long restraint, the thing is very visible : and further, that nothing but a difficult, uneasy, and unnatural restraint, can prevent the world from seeing, that a wicked man is a wicked man ; and even that with all that restraint he is not safe, but will sometime or other discover himself. Let therefore the hypocrite put his case in the best light he can ; he must, in order to prevent the world's knowing what he really is, put himself to a continual torture, in acting a part quite contrary to his inclinations. He must seem to love what he mortally hates ; to admire what he despises ; to hate what he loves ; and to despise what he inwardly adores. And by all this unnatural practice upon himself he proves effectually what our Saviour chiefly designs by the maxim in our text ; that if we pretend to any thing really good, it is our interest to be what we pretend ; and that the torture of labouring to appear what we are not, is not worth the bearing, for the sake of the sorry reward it produces, in deceiving the world for a short time.

HITHERTO our Lord may be understood

stood as speaking of the whole tenour of the conversation, including both speech and actions. In the remaining part of the text he confines himself more visibly to mens conversing by speech, and their discovering, by the tenor of that conversation, what their own real characters are. And indeed so great a part of what we do is transacted by speech, that the principles of the heart and mind are, upon the whole, as sure to be discovered by the train of discourse we choose, and into which we most easily and delightfully fall, as by the actions themselves. Nay, so great is the caution to be secret in most actions of a shocking nature, that it is indeed more easy to judge with certainty of the character of a man by the conversation he chooses, than by many of the actions themselves which he performs.

To this purpose was the next general head I proposed to discourse on ; viz.

III. THAT the train of thoughts in which we delight will betray itself in our speech, as well as in our general course of action ; so that it will be known, by the tendency of our conversation in this respect, whether we be good or evil.

THAT this was clearly our Lord's sense, appears by those words of his to the wicked Pharisees, ver. 34, 35. *O generation of vipers, how can ye being evil speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good trea-*

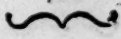
SERM. *treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things;*

II. *and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.* He still continues to

argue upon the same maxim, as in the preceding part of the text; that such as the inward principle is, such will the effects be.

AND it is no reasonable objection hereunto, that very wicked men have deceived their neighbours by affecting to discourse in a religious manner. For if hereby they do impose upon some; there are yet some, and must be some, to whom they talk without disguise, and so as plainly to shew, that their heart is quite another way inclined. It is not in nature to put on the disguise always and in all companies. And the consequence of this will be; that sometimes, when the hypocrite would least wish for it, he shall be detected by himself; by the overflowing of his own heart, and the impossibility of keeping his tongue always under restraint. Moreover, the hypocrite is in danger of this deception; that as he actually does some things which have the outward appearance of goodness, he will be apt to hope and expect, that his company should forbear judging hard of him, though he should now and then indulge himself in conversation of an immoral tendency; because they who observe the strictest decency themselves, if they do hear an unbecoming thing from a man of any reputation for goodness in other respects,

spects, will for meer civilitie's sake hide their S E R M.
dislike and resentment as much as they can. II.

By such means is a man of a corrupt heart 
betrayed : that is to say, by such means he
betrays himself ; and takes courage, and goes
on, from one indecency in speech to another,
till the guard is quite thrown off : at least
he is always in this danger, while his heart
continues corrupt ; always in danger of vent-
ing out his own impurities, with which his
heart abounds.

THIS general observation is applicable to
all those particulars, wherein we are capable
of discovering the bent of our minds with
regard to religion and virtue.

IF a man is truly and seriously religious,
if he does *with all his heart and soul and
mind and strength* love that divine being, to
whom his religious regards are due ; it is
certain he will not, and indeed cannot al-
low himself to talk of religion by way of
derision, cannot voluntarily expose it to con-
tempt. On the contrary it may be expected
from such a man, that according to the de-
gree he possesses of prudence and discretion,
he will be useful to the cause of religion in
his conversation ; will not only defend it as
well as he is able, when it is assaulted, but
will be glad of favourable opportunities to
recommend it. He will discover an un-
affected delight and pleasure in conversation
of a religious kind : and if he cannot instruct
those

SERM. those with whom he converses, yet he will,

II. by the favour of piety appearing in his discourse, confirm them in their esteem and love of it.

ON the contrary, if a man's religion is only pretence, and he has no love for it in his heart ; and especially if he be very viciously inclined, in which case, the restraints of religion are a burden to him ; he will readily fall in with opportunities of ridiculing and exposing to contempt what is so disagreeable to him. The fear of God and the love of God have no place in his heart : and therefore, though to serve a turn he may in conversation sometimes put on the appearance of these principles ; yet the prevailing course will be found to be the contrary way. Even in company which is religiously inclined, he will be in danger of betraying himself : but where this restraint is off, he will catch at opportunities to show how little he is influenced by any regards to the divine being. And if there be any one point, wherein such a man thinks he can best take advantage against that which thwarts his vicious inclinations, there he will be sure to display himself the most largely, and with the greatest delight. This, I doubt not, is the reason, why so many are to be found, at this day, trying their wit against the christian religion. They know and feel, that the christian doctrine condemns,

demns, as any doctrine which comes from S E R M.
God must condemn, that licentious way of II.
life which they have chosen to themselves: 
and they apprehend, that the generality of
professed christians have not studied the
proofs of the credibility of the gospel so
well, but that they may be at a loss to an-
swer some questions which they can pro-
pose; or at least may be confounded by a
a smart joke upon a difficult text of scrip-
ture, or upon an injudicious explication,
which some well-meaning christian had
given of it. Nothing is more natural, than
that such as this should be the furniture of
a conversation, where the heart has enter-
tained a hatred of the purity of Christ's
doctrine, and an aversion to that humble-
ness of mind, which is necessary to make a
true christian.

I MIGHT observe concerning particular
vices, that according as any of them pre-
vail in the heart, so they will, in spite of
all restraint, some time or other discover
themselves in the conversation. To what
source can you ascribe that impurity of talk,
in which great numbers delight themselves?
Does it proceed from chaste and decent
thoughts, or the contrary? To what will
you ascribe that kind of discourse, wherein
a man is continually labouring to let his
company know, how considerable a person
he himself is? Does it proceed from humi-
lity

SERM. lity and lowliness of mind, or from the

II. contrary principle? What is it that prompts
 some men to be so frequently engaged in
 discourse of a contentious kind? Is it their
 love of peace, or their delight in strife and
 debate? What makes the glutton and the
 drunkard talk so much as they do, of their eat-
 ing and drinking? And what is it that makes
 those of a nice taste abound so much in their
 discourse about elegance of entertainments?
 Surely it cannot be a principle of temper-
 ance, or an earnest desire of furnishing their
 minds with useful knowledge. No: it must
 be some principle, of the same nature as the
 subject itself, upon which the discourse so
 delightfully and so frequently turns.

THESE things are sufficient to illustrate the
 truth of that maxim of our Saviour in the
 text, that *out of the abundance of the heart the
 mouth speaketh*. And the importance of it
 he shews, by putting us in mind; that if
 we are inwardly good, we shall *out of the
 good treasure of our hearts bring forth good
 things*; if inwardly evil and corrupt, *out of
 the evil treasure of our hearts we shall bring
 forth evil things*. Every one of us best knows
 how to apply these general observations to
 the prevailing bent of his own conversation.
 We ourselves can best tell: however our
 neighbours can in a good measure tell for
 us, whether the general tendency of our
 conversation leaves a savour of godliness or
 impiety;

impiety ; whether it recommends an affectionate reverence of the divine being, or a neglect, or which is worse, a contempt of him ; whether it tends to promote virtue or to encourage vice ; whether to suggest good thoughts and inclinations, or those which are corrupt and hurtful. Of thus much importance is the maxim itself, that

S E R M.

II.

out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ; and the subsequent observation, that a good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. From whence it will follow ; that if we would be thought to be good men while we are in this world ; if we are desirous of that esteem and reputation ; the only sure way is to guard our hearts, to secure good principles within, to fix within our souls the love of that which is really good, really religious and virtuous. For if we do not ; all the art, all the restraint in the world, all the torture we can put ourselves to, for saving of appearances, will not effectually answer its end ; but we shall, by the prevailing tendency of our discourse, discover what we ourselves really are. Let christians remember, that this is the doctrine of their lord and master.

BUT this is the smallest part of the importance of Christ's maxim. For it follows,

IV. THAT

SERM. IV. THAT it is of the highest importance that we set a watch upon our tongues,
 II. because *we must give account in the day of judgment* of every thing we say, as well as every thing we do; and shall be *justified or condemned*, according as it shall appear we have chosen a sober and useful, or an idle and hurtful method of conversing.

THIS our Saviour delivers with a kind of asseveration, ver. 36, 37. *But I say unto you, that every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

THIS last saying of our Saviour, *by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned*, is of so large an extent, as to reach every part of our conversation; and to signifie, that no part of it will escape the final cognizance of the great judge. Vain therefore are the labours of those, who would confine what our Saviour says in the preceding verse, *concerning idle words*, and the *giving account of them in the day of judgment*, to blasphemous speeches, such as those which gave occasion to this his discourse. The whole drift of our Lord's discourse in the five verses which I have taken for my text, is to warn men to fix good principles in their hearts, that they may prevent every kind of evil in their conversation,

tion, as well as that of blasphemy. And SERM.
this was frequently our Saviour's method ; II.
and perfectly became him, who was sent to
be our instructor and admonisher in every
part of our conduct. It became his high
wisdom and benevolence, to graft large and
general instructions and warnings upon the
occasion of particular evils. And besides ;
why should our Lord, when he had been
discouraging of the most pernicious and in-
curable of all evils, choose to conclude his
discourse with a warning against *idle words*,
if thereby he still confined his meaning to
those most pernicious evils, which gave the
immediate occasion to his speech ? Is it not
much more likely, that he would conclude
with a serious warning against all the evils of
speech, even the lower sort, than that he
should call *blasphemy*, and all the worst a-
buses of speech, by the soft name of *idle*
words ?

THE reason, why some choose thus to
confine the meaning of our Lord's expres-
sion, is probably because they think it hard,
that *every idle word should be called into judg-*
ment ; they cannot believe that this is con-
sistent with the wisdom or the goodness of
the supreme judge, or with the merciful
principles and foundations, upon which the
christian doctrine is built. But perhaps the
mistake may be on their own side ; and they
may take those to be *idle words*, which really
are

SERM. are not so, nor ever by our Saviour under-

II. stood to be so. A great part of our conversation in the world is about indifferent things; about what has happened to ourselves or our friends or acquaintance, or what prospects we or they have in view: a great part, about those affairs of our common employment, which are in themselves neither good nor evil; besides what is employed about necessities. Now it is certain, that even the discourse about indifferent things cannot be said to be *idle words*, unless it be so ordered by an ill habit of mind, as to exclude every thing that is useful. If it turns to any thing that is really hurtful, then it ceases to be indifferent. And if any have, by indulging a corrupt inclination, contracted such a habit of trifling levity, as constantly to exclude all things of a serious kind: there must in such conversation be abundance of what is really *idle*, corrupt and good for nothing; abundance of that, for which in all reason they ought *to give account* to him, who gave them the faculty of speech for wiser and nobler purposes. In the mean time, that conversation even about indifferent things, which proceeds from a good habit of mind, which is innocently agreeable, and which upon proper occasions gives way to serious discourse about things of importance, is not *idle*, but useful. And therefore, if we take care to retain upon our minds a habitual reverence

reverence towards God, and love to our fellow creatures, and put only those general re-
straints upon our passions, which are abso-
lutely necessary to constitute a virtuous cha-
racter; there will be no need to watch every particular word we say, for fear of having it hereafter condemned as an *idle word*.
Our Saviour's expressions in the text have no tendency to raise any superstitious fears. But they do, upon the most just and rational principles, tend to banish from mens conversation whatever is really foolish and trifling; and especially whatever is hurtful and pernicious. If any man will plead for such kind of discourse, and think it hard that it should be *condemned*; he will find no countenance for him, either in the doctrine of Christ, or in the reason of things.

I SHALL conclude with observing; that it is greatly to the honour of the christian religion, that it teaches us to set a guard upon our speech; and particularly, that it assures us we shall be happy or miserable hereafter, according as it shall appear we have improved or abused that noble faculty, whereby we are as much distinguished from the brute creation, as by the principle of reason itself, which is to guide it. It is, I say, an honour to the christian religion, to be assured by its great author, that *for every idle word we must give account in the day of judgment*; and that *by our words we shall be*
E justified,

S E R M. *justified, and by our words be condemned.* For

II. this is a doctrine, which never could proceed from an evil spirit. It is agreeable to our best reason and judgment that it should be thus : and any doctrine that teaches otherwise evidently betrays its own corruptness. Does it become rational creatures to employ themselves in that kind of conversation, which is really *idle*, and answers no one useful purpose ? Can they answer it to themselves upon cool reflexion ? If they cannot do this ; how is it consistent with the wisdom of that supreme governour, who intrusted them with the faculty of speech for useful and noble purposes, and who sees they wilfully neglect all such purposes, and employ the faculty quite another way, to take no notice of such an abuse ? How can it be consistent with the wisdom of the supreme governour, to forbear punishing this abuse, according to the degree of its guilt ?

SINCE therefore both reason and revelation concur to assure us, that we shall finally be judged according to the use we have made of the faculty of speech, according as it shall appear, that we have employed it to the honour of God and the good of mankind, or to the dishonour of religion, and the corrupting of the minds of those with whom we conversed ; let us resolve to set a guard upon our own conversation. If we would
not

not prove the unhappy means of spreading licentious principles, and a contempt of religion in general; and if we would not be condemned in the great day, for the mischief thereby done to the souls of men, as well as for our own personal guilt: let us never allow ourselves to speak in a contemptuous manner of that which demands our reverence. If we would not be condemned for corrupting our neighbours minds with impure and lewd thoughts; let us carefully avoid all speeches of that kind. If we would not hereafter be answerable for the dreadful effects of wrath and strife and contention; let us not by our own manner of conversing excite angry passions in others. If we would avoid the heavy judgment, which will fall upon those, who delight to speak evil of their neighbours; let us speak as well of them as we can with a good conscience; and forbear saying any thing ill of them till we are obliged to it; and take care never to charge them with any guilt which does not belong to them.

I MIGHT thus go on to instance in many other particulars: instead of which this general advice may suffice. If we would secure ourselves against all the evils and mischiefs of an ungoverned tongue; let us *keep our hearts with all diligence*, and take care that good principles be firmly established there; assuring ourselves that our Saviour's

SERM. maxim will always prove true ; *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak.*

II. If therefore we do in earnest desire to keep at the farthest distance from that *blasphemy*, which was the immediate occasion of our Saviour's words in the text, and from the dreadful consequences of it : let our minds be ever open to conviction ; let us always be ready to receive and to obey whatever shall, upon good grounds, appear to be the mind of God. With this disposition, we shall be secure against the worst of evils. But if we are not thus guarded ; there is no evil so great, into which we may not fall, in the course of our actions ; no blasphemy which we may not be induced to utter with our mouths ; and consequently, no severity of punishment, which we may not bring down upon our own heads.





S E R M O N III.

Of oaths and vows.

MATTH. V. 33---37.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

TIS one of the great excellencies of the christian religion, that it sets forth, more fully and particularly than any
E 3 other

SERM. other institution ever did, those duties which
 III. are reasonably expected from us ; and that
 ~~~~~ though it requires nothing, but what is agreeable to the light of our nature, and what the judgment cannot forbear approving, when fairly proposed to it, yet it does not leave men so much to the necessity of inferring important duties by way of consequence from general principles, as all other schemes of religion have done. It presents us with the same general principles of religion, which have been good and found in all ages, and which must be the necessary foundations of true religion to the end of the world : it confirms and establishes these ; it builds upon them ; and throughout its whole compass and extent takes them for granted, even when it does not particularly make mention of them. But it does not leave men so much to the uncertainty of their own reasonings, biassed as they generally are with passions and prejudices, as other dispensations have done : but instead thereof, enters into a very particular detail of those duties, which arise from the relations we bear to God and to each other ; and without a train of metaphysical arguments to demonstrate the natural connexion of things, offers such considerations to our minds, in the character of the person who was sent of God to publish this religion, as may satisfy us, that all the duties enjoined are such

as

as do really become us, such as God expects SERM.  
from us, and such as will approve them- III.  
selves to our reason and judgment, the more   
we reflect upon them.

OUR Lord's sermon from the mount, of which my text is a part, is a full proof of this truth. For it recommends to us a greater variety of precepts, which the judgment and conscience cannot help approving, than any one discourse ever did: it beats down many subterfuges, under which the propensions to sin had taken shelter: and it takes occasion from those subterfuges to shew, that whatever can be called true and serious religion, must come from the heart, and thence proceed to influence the actions.

IN our text particularly, our Lord's view is to shew, that a true reverence of God in the heart would prevent, not only the horrid sin of perjury, but likewise the necessity of any oaths at all; and that it would most certainly banish out of conversation the needless mention of the name God upon trivial occasions. And whoever considers the dreadful consequences of perjury, to the forsworn person himself, in laying waste his conscience; and to the property, and even the life of those against whom the false oath is taken; whoever considers the danger of running into perjury, by mens allowing themselves to make free with the awful name of God upon trifling occasions,



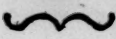
SERM. and even by the multiplying of oaths unnecessarily in courts of judicature ; must  
 III. own, that our Saviour had good reason to concern himself earnestly in this affair, as what is of great importance in religion. Let us therefore consider his words ; and remember the authority of him that spoke them.

OUR Lord begins with saying, *Ye have heard, that it hath been said to them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself.* Which words some take to be a quotation of the third command in the decalogue, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ;* which might very well have been rendered, *Thou shalt not swear falsely by the name of the Lord thy God.* But even in case this was our Lord's design ; yet from the words which immediately follow, *but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths,* it is probable, that our Saviour here gave the substance of several precepts in the *Mosaic* law, relating to the reverence of an oath, besides that of the third command ; and particularly, that he included the directions given under that dispensation, concerning vows and voluntary engagements ratified by an oath, for the performance of such and such things in time to come.

Now our Lord, by forbearing to give any particular judgment concerning perjury and concerning vows, and by turning his discourse

discourse to the rash folly of swearing in S E R M.  
common conversation, and the mincing of III.  
an oath by forbearing to name the divine ~~~~~  
being, though he is necessarily referred to;  
seems to leave what relates to perjury and  
to voluntary engagements much as he found  
them; perjury condemned as one of the  
most crying sins; and vows rather repre-  
sented as needless and inexpedient, than use-  
ful. The case seems to have stood thus  
with regard to vows, even in the old testa-  
ment; unless you will except the promises,  
made in a time of distress, of thanksgiving  
to God, if he would be pleased to grant a  
deliverance: which thanksgivings were of  
course attended with sacrifice. As to other  
vows, the observation, I believe, will gene-  
rally hold good; that how much soever  
persons are commended for keeping of them  
when they are made, yet they are not com-  
mended for entering into the engagement.  
And our Saviour's not interposing directly  
concerning them, when he is speaking of  
the religion of an oath, and telling the peo-  
ple what they had been taught; and his  
turning the discourse to oaths in common  
conversation; seems, I say, to confirm the  
substance of what had been delivered under  
the dispensation of the law relating to these  
matters, and to shew, that there was some-  
thing further, which had relation to the reve-  
rence of an oath, which the people of his  
time

SERM. time had not sufficiently regarded. But in-

III. asmuch as our Saviour prefaces his discourse about unnecessary oaths in common conversation with words of an universal extent, *I say unto you, swear not at all*; and makes no particular mention of oaths in courts of judicature about civil affairs; some have from this conduct scrupled the use of an oath even upon such occasions. It will therefore be worth our while, in the handling these words of Christ, to take in this point. And accordingly in discoursing on this text, I propose to consider,

I. THE horrid sin of perjury.

II. THE great inexpediency of abridging our just liberty by voluntary engagements of a religious kind.

III. THE danger of running by degrees into the dreadful sin of perjury, by allowing ourselves to make free with the name of God upon unnecessary occasions; and the direction which Christ gives relating to this matter.

IV. THE state of the case with regard to the general prohibition, *swear not at all*.

I. THE horrid sin of perjury. Perjury is the wilful violation of an oath. In promissory cases there seems to be this wilful violation, even in the time of taking the oath, when the swearer has no real intention to perform what by his oath he engages to do; as well as afterwards, in acting contrary to what was the  
the

the design of the oath, and to his own in-  
tention when he took it. In cases of asser-  
tion or affirmation; the sacredness of an  
oath is wilfully violated, and the guilt of  
perjury contracted, when a thing is by an  
appeal to God asserted to be true, which  
the swearer knows or believes to be false.  
In every oath we call God to witness to  
the truth of what we affirm, or to the sin-  
cerity of our intentions in what we promise.  
This appeal to the divine being is on all  
hands agreed to be of the nature and essence  
of an oath: and further it is generally a-  
greed, that in an oath we appeal to God,  
not only as a witness of our truth, but an  
avenger in case we affirm a known falshood,  
or fail to perform according to our power  
what we engage for. Now, even the ap-  
pealing to the God of truth and purity, on-  
ly as a witness of what he and we ourselves  
know to be false, is a most abominable pro-  
vocation to his heavenly majesty. And I  
cannot but think, that the appealing to God as  
a witness, considering what kind of a being  
he is, includes an appeal to him as an aven-  
ger of falshood. For it is to no purpose, to  
appeal to God merely as one who knows  
whether we affirm truth or untruth; since  
we know it is not the method of his provi-  
dence to interpose immediately upon such  
appeals, to let the world see whether men  
have sworn truly or falsely. He must be  
appealed

SERM.  
III.  
~~~~~


SERM. appealed to as clothed with other perfections,

III. besides meer knowledge: at least he who
 makes the appeal to God's perfect knowledge must consider him in other views; and particularly, as the powerful and righteous governour of the world. On which account every solemn appeal to God is in effect an invocation of his vengeance if we falsifie. And accordingly, there are passages in the old testament, which make the *oath of God*, and the *curse of God*, to mean the same thing. I say, the very appeal to God as a witness of our truth, considering what a being he is, does in effect include the appeal to him as an avenger. For the case is very different between appealing to God, and appealing to the knowledge of our fellow creatures. Even in appealing to a man of probity and virtue, that what we affirm is true, when he and we ourselves know it is false; we are guilty of the highest affront we can offer to such a person; as it is setting him to patronize our falshood with the authority of his good character. But when all this is done, even though it should be done before a man's face, and in the presence of a great assembly; the man to whom the appeal is made, has not any thing like the indignity offered to him, which is offered to the most high God, when he is appealed to as witness of a falshood: because, as was before observed, it is well known

not

not to be the method of divine providence SERMON.
to interpose in mens ordinary dealings, and III.
to declare to the world his exprefs approba-
tion or disapprobation of particular actions. 
He reserves himself in these things to a fu-
ture time; whereas any man thus abused,
would presently upon the spot discover the
villany.

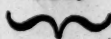
THE crime therefore of perjury is ex-
ceedingly great; especially if the matter of
the false oath be such, as will injure ano-
ther in his just possessions. It is not easy for
words to expresse the greatness of this crime.
For, first of all, 'tis making God a liar, in
appealing to his knowledge for confirming
as truth what he knows to be false. Then
it is a defiance of him in his character of
governor and judge: it shews an utter dis-
regard of that purity, whereby he hates our
falshood; and a contempt of that power
which enables him, and of that justice
which calls upon him, to avenge it; and
it puts away from us, at that time, the
hope of recourse to his mercy. And when
it is in a case injurious and oppressive to our
neighbour; it is, as far as in us lies, making
God accessary to that oppression, and ap-
pealing to his governing attributes for this
wicked purpose.

How dreadfully therefore do men lay
waste their consciences, who know the na-
ture of an oath, as it is an appeal to God,
and

SERM. and yet dare thus to abuse it? Of how per-

III.  nicious consequence is this sin of wilful perjury? This is not the case of those, who swear according to the best of their knowledge, even though they should, by having had wrong information, declare things which are not true in fact. For this they are not answerable: but for the truth or untruth of their own minds they are answerable. And thus much may serve for the first head of discourse. Let us consider,

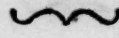
II. THE great inexpediency of abridging our just liberties by voluntary engagements of a religious kind. This, one would think, should be evident at first sight; and that there is, generally speaking, more of superstition than of true religion, in those engagements which people take upon themselves without a command so to do. Why should we not be content with those engagements, which the law of nature and the express command of God have laid upon us? What need is there of laying ourselves under a particular engagement, to do what God requires of us already, and what therefore we are bound to perform, whether we make a vow about it or not? And as for those things which are not commanded, but left at our liberty; why should we not be thankful for that liberty, and use it from time to time, just as we see the providence of God enables us, and makes it proper
for

for us? If at once we tie ourselves down, SERM.
that such a thing we will do, and in such a III.
course we will proceed; how know we, 
but that we may engage ourselves to the
performance of a thing, which in process
of time will be altogether unsuitable to the
state of our affairs, and inconsistent with and
contrary to our duty in other respects? Is
not this tempting of God? and where is the
virtue or the wisdom of this? Where indeed
is the wisdom or the virtue of tying our hands,
and abridging that liberty, in things of an in-
different nature, for which we ought to be
thankful, and which we ought to use, ac-
cording as in process of time our affairs hap-
pen to change?

I HAVE no need here to run out against
vows of pilgrimage, and of a monastic life, and
a thousand other such popish fopperies. 'Tis
sufficient in general to observe: that in
matters not enjoined, we wrong ourselves,
when we make vows about what we may
as well or better perform without them:
and in matters of real duty, the obligation,
which binds that duty upon us, will be suf-
ficient, if we exercise our thoughts as we
ought with relation to it; and is indeed a
better principle to proceed upon, in the dis-
charge of the duty, than what comes only
from ourselves.

I MIGHT appeal to you particularly as
christians, with regard to those two engage-
ments,

SERM. ments, which by the authority of Jesus

III.  Christ you are obliged to enter into. Both these you are directed to take upon yourselves: and they are of a very useful tendency, to strengthen your resolutions for adhering to the whole of that pure religion, which Christ was sent to teach you; which usefulness, I doubt not, was the very reason of their institution. Your Lord and Saviour requires you to be *baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost*; that thereby you may solemnly profess your resolution to adhere to that holy doctrine, which is the mind and will of God the Father, published to the world by his Son, whom he sent from heaven for that purpose, and confirmed by the power of the Holy Ghost. And the having once taken upon us this solemn profession, in obedience to Christ, will, if it be not our own fault, be very useful to us as long as we live; as it will give frequent occasion to reflect upon what we have done. And as to the other sacrament, that of the Lord's supper, wherein mention is made of *Christ's blood*, as the ratification of a *new covenant*: if that covenant be understood to be between God and us, as I think it plain it must be; then, *as often as we drink that cup*, which represents *the blood of the new covenant*, we are put in mind of our part in the covenant, our obligations to a thankful obedience;

dience ; as well as of God's part, which is, S E R M.
to be our merciful father through Christ. III.

'TIS true, that by entring into these obligations, we are really obliged to no more, than we should have been, if we had not taken the engagements upon us. Without these, the evidence of Christ's mission is clear ; the moral doctrine he preached is pure ; and he appears to have been sent of God to assure us, that he expects we should regard it in our practice. But the wisdom of God saw, that it was proper for us to own our obligations, and to renew them ; that this might be the means of quickening us to the practice of our duty, which without such means we might be too apt to forget : and therefore he required our entering into such engagements, by the very same authority, which required us to hearken to and obey Christ's preceptive doctrine : so that the refusal of obedience here is arraigning the wisdom, and rejecting the authority of God.

BUT what is there in all this, to countenance voluntary engagements of our own contriving ? The argument is rather against, than for them. For since we are required to enter into positive engagements to the whole of our duty as christians ; since we are to do this, not only once for all, when we solemnly profess ourselves christians ; but likewise to renew the obligation frequently

F

after-

SERM. afterwards: this very thought should satisfie us that here is enough; and that the going further than the wisdom of God has directed may lead us into danger. We are not so wise, or so capable of laying obligations upon ourselves, as God is; and the multiplying these things, I should very much fear, would embarrass our minds, rather than help them forward in the course of real religion.

BUT leaving these things, let us now observe, how dangerous is the practice of bringing religious vows into indifferent matters, wherein religion is not at all properly concerned. Whatever may be said of some particular cases; the indulging such inclinations endangers the drawing off the mind from plain moral duty, as it takes up too much of the thoughts another way, still under the specious pretence of religion. It is for this very reason, I doubt not, that in the old testament vows about indifferent things are spoken of in so slight a manner, though it is declared at the same time, that when they are entered into, they must be performed. See to this purpose *Deut. xxiii. 21, 22. When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee: but if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.*

I SHALL add nothing more under this SERM. head, than only this ; that the being very forward to make vows and voluntary engagements, where they are not required of us, will be apt to wear off from our minds that reverence which is due to an oath ; as it will tempt us, in process of time, to neglect the performing of what we too rashly made a matter of religion. This may weaken in our minds the regard due to a solemn engagement, lawfully and religiously entered into ; since the engagement is the same, though the reasons of taking it upon us are different. But the mention of this leads me to consider,

III. THE danger of running gradually into the dreadful sin of perjury, by allowing ourselves to make free with the name of God upon unnecessary occasions ; and the direction which Christ gives relating to this matter.

THIS has been already observed with relation to vows : and the same thing takes place with regard to all promises, though ever so seriously and sincerely made, if they be needless, and such as bring a difficulty upon us without answering any good end. But if this be the case with regard to things of a serious nature, what shall we say concerning the rashness of profaning the name of God in common conversation ; the calling upon him to witness to our trifles, and

S E R M. the imprecating of his vengeance at every sen-

III. tence we speak? Such is the wickedness of
 ~~~~~ some men, that when their oaths and curses  
 can answer no end at all, but to make them  
 disbelieved ; yet rather than fail to be pro-  
 fane, they will curse themselves a thousand  
 times in a day, and appeal to God, without  
 one serious thought about any such being.  
 The best that can be said of great numbers  
 of men, in their cursing and swearing, is,  
 that they have no meaning at all ; and that  
 they use the tremendous name of God upon  
 every trifling occasion, by the force of meer  
 habit, as an expletive in their discourse, to  
 keep up conversation.

B U T is not this the ready way to expel all  
 religious sense of a divine being quite out of  
 the mind ? What reverence of the heaven-  
 ly majesty can that man be supposed to have,  
 when called upon a lawful occasion to ap-  
 peal to him, who has ridiculed him mil-  
 lions of times, by playing with his awful  
 name, and shewing that he had no serious  
 sense of any such being ? What reason has  
 any man to believe, that such a one is sin-  
 cere, in calling God to witness the truth of  
 any thing he says ? Why shall he be thought  
 more in earnest, when called to take an oath,  
 than when he throws out volleys of them of  
 his own accord ? What should restrain  
 him from perjury ; either in swearing for  
 true what he knows to be false ; or in  
 promising

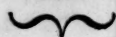
promising what he will never perform? SERM.  
since the only bond to oblige him is the ap- III.  
peal to that awful being, whom he has so  
habitually learned to ridicule, that he knows  
not when he swears and when he does not  
swear.

I NEED not say any more concerning  
common swearers: and the rather, because  
I would hope I have not one such person  
now to hear me. But it was proper to say  
something of the ridiculous wickedness of  
this practice; if it were only to persuade  
people of more sober minds, to keep at a  
greater distance from it than sometimes they  
do. And this undoubtedly is one view of  
our Saviour, in those words which conclude  
our text: *Let your communication be yea,  
yea, nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than  
these cometh of evil.*

THESE words do indeed advise us to  
take care of the truth of whatever we af-  
firm, that people may know they may safe-  
ly depend upon our word. But ~~even here~~ <sup>besides this</sup>  
~~by~~ they shew, how foolish it is, to intro-  
duce the name of God unnecessarily into  
our common conversation, even though we  
should not profane it in that high degree,  
or in the same manner, as others do. There  
are many, who would be much offended  
at being called profane, who yet at every  
turn are apt to mention the name of *the*  
*Lord*, not so much out of reverence to him,

S E R M. as out of respect to a foolish and indefensible custom. I wish such persons would not do

III.



so much honour to a fashion, which deserves not their imitation; that they could have the courage to honour GOD, by abstaining from the mention of his name upon all trifling occasions. Persons of good sense and good behaviour stand not in need of any such expletives to recommend their discourse. The abstaining from such manners of speech can never make them deserve disesteem; or indeed endanger their incurring it with any, whose company is worth the seeking. And to use any manner of speech which only borders upon profaneness, merely to oblige those who really are profane, is something very far from virtue. What can be called *taking the Lord's name in vain*, if the frequent interlarding our speech with it be not so, when we can have no better view in it, than the filling up discourse, and the pleasing of those, who do not pretend to have a reverence of God? How much better is it therefore even to dare to be singular, when we fall into such company, than to offend God, for fear of being thought religious by them? All the art in the world will never reconcile this way of conversing, with our Lord's direction just now mentioned, or with the reason assigned for it; *Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatever is more than these cometh*  
of

*of evil.* 'Tis certain, the direction is not to SERM.  
be understood in such a sense, as if no other III.  
words might be used, besides those here ex-  
pressed ; for then there could be no conver-  
sation at all. But there is a wide distance  
between this and the opposite extreme. And  
indeed it is evident beyond all reasonable  
doubt, that our Lord meant, in connexion  
with what he had before been saying about  
profaning the name of God ; that it be-  
comes us to abstain from all irreverent men-  
tion of that sacred name ; and that the fre-  
quent needless unprofitable repetition of it,  
on every trifling occasion, does really *pro-*  
*ceed from evil.*

UNDER this head I shall briefly observe  
further our Lord's prohibition of that kind  
of swearing, which was, by the *Jews* of  
his time, accounted neither to be a crime,  
nor to be obligatory upon the person so  
swearing ; that is, the swearing by *heaven*,  
or by *earth*, by *Jerusalem*, by a *man's*  
*head*, or by any other thing exclusive of  
God himself. This is a poor mean subter-  
fuge : the like to which some men and wo-  
men to this day have in great esteem, as some  
relief to them, when their consciences will  
not let them curse and swear boldly like the  
profane men of the world, and yet they  
have a mind not to be over-scrupulous. Our  
Saviour's account of this matter is ; that  
they had as good speak out, and swear by



SERM. God himself, as by his *throne*, his *foot-stool*,  
 III. his *holy city*, or any of his creatures, the  
 effects of his power and wisdom ; that all  
 these come at length to the same thing ; and  
 intimate, that we would make out, by an  
 appeal to something or other, after the man-  
 ner of swearing by the divine being him-  
 self, that what we affirm is both true and  
 of importance ; and that there is indeed no  
 tolerable sense in such kind of oaths, any  
 otherwise than as they lead immediately to  
 God, who is the proper object of appeals.

I PROCEED now to consider,

IV. THE state of the case with regard to  
 the general prohibition, *Swear not at all*.

SOME have inferred from these words,  
 that it is forbidden by our Saviour to take  
 an oath upon any account whatsoever ; and  
 particularly, that it is not lawful to make a  
 solemn appeal to God, even in a court of ju-  
 dicature, when called to give a testimony  
 of matters of fact, for deciding a controver-  
 sy. And indeed, if you will take these  
 words, *swear not at all*, separately from the  
 context, that must be the meaning of them.  
 But then by the same rule you may make  
 any thing out of every thing ; and particu-  
 larly, you may make the most consistent  
 passages of scripture contradict one another ;  
 whereas take them connected as they are,  
 and they perfectly agree together.

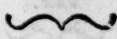
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THE state of the case appears to be this. SERM.  
 Our Lord begun with putting the people III.  
 in mind, that they had been taught in the law of *Moses*, partly from the decalogue, and partly from other precepts scattered up and down in the Pentateuch, that they ought never to forswear themselves; and that whenever they had bound themselves by an oath, which yet was always understood to be such, as they had power to bind themselves by, they should take care faithfully to discharge their obligation. After this, he does not so much as interpose at all with relation to these matters; and consequently agrees with the *Mosaical* precepts in condemning perjury; and allows at least thus much concerning vows, that every lawful engagement, which men had solemnly entered into, and were able to perform, they ought to perform. 'Tis further to be observed; that he says not the least word concerning oaths in a court of judicature, or solemn appeals to God upon other important occasions which required it; though there are many instances recorded in the old testament of such oaths, and recorded without any testimony of disapprobation. And his silence about these matters is rather an argument of his approving the directions given in the old testament, to  
*swear by the name of God in truth, in judgment,*

<sup>d</sup> Jer. iv. 2.

SERM ment, and in righteousness, than a disappro-  
 III. bation ; especially considering what himself  
 says in our text concerning perjury, which  
 he leaves condemned, as he found it. But  
 further, it is to be observed ; that the pro-  
 hibition, *swear not at all*, is closely connect-  
 ed with the mention of those things, which  
 relate only to common conversation, where-  
 in the *Jews* of those days used to mince  
 an oath, and count it no crime. And that  
 our Saviour here confines himself to this con-  
 nexion, relating to the manner of converse,  
 appears from the last verse, wherein he con-  
 cludes his advice ; *Let your communication be*  
*yea, yea, nay, nay.*

THIS of itself, I think, should be enough  
 to satisfy us, that Christ does not forbid the  
 religion of an oath, but the irreligious abuse  
 of it. And there are great numbers of pas-  
 sages in the new testament, as well as in the  
 old, which confirm this account. I need  
 not mention *Abraham's* taking an oath of  
 his servant *Eliezer*, by the Lord, the God of  
 heaven, and the God of the earth, that he would  
 not take a wife to his son *Isaac* of the daugh-  
 ters of the Canaanites, Gen. xxiv. 2, 3, 4.  
 but that he would go seek one out of his own  
 country and kindred. I choose rather to ob-  
 serve, with the author to the *Hebrews*, that  
 the blessed God himself, when he would  
 confirm to this same *Abraham* the certainty  
 of the promise he made him, because he could  
 swear

*swear by no greater, swore by himself; whereas* SERM.  
*men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for* III.  
*confirmation is to them an end of all strife.* Heb. 

vi. 13--17. If the apostle here had only referred to a custom among men, a usual custom; and had neither said any thing to justify or condemn such a practice; it had not been so much to our purpose. But when a new testament writer introduces the Almighty himself, as taking a solemn oath, for confirming a truth of importance to his creature; and observes, that this is the very method, which men use for *confirmation, and to make an end of all strife, that men swear by a greater*, because their circumstances require it, but *God swears by himself, because there is no greater*: this plainly shews, that this writer had no notion of Christ's intire forbidding the religious use of an oath.

THE same thing is further justly argued from the example of *St. Paul*; who upon important occasions, to satisfy the people to whom he wrote, of his sincerity in what he wrote, *calls God for a record upon his soul*, 2 Cor. i. 23. And so again, *Gal. i. 20. Now, the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.* And the like in other places, where the importance of the matter itself, and of giving full assurance to those with whom he had to do, required it.

AND that our Saviour himself did not



S E R M. disapprove the use of oaths in a court of  
 III. judicature, but held himself obliged to answer upon oath, even when he was under an unrighteous prosecution for his life ; appears by the answer he gave to the high-priest, when he *adjured him by the living God, to declare, whether he were the Christ, the son of God.* Mat. xxvi. 63.

FROM all these passages laid together it appears, that Christ left the business of an oath as he found it ; as a matter of natural right, and that to which we might be lawfully called. And by the practice of such, as must be presumed to understand his meaning, and not to oppose it, it appears to be what we ourselves, in a matter of great importance for the good of our fellow-creatures, may use even of our own accord. Indeed, our Saviour does not in the text say any thing directly upon this subject : but yet all the parts of the text concur to shew, that he would have us regard the religion of an oath, and never to abuse it.

I MAKE no doubt, that the frequent use of oaths in civil affairs, and the imposing them upon some improper occasions, increases the scruple against an oath in general, in the consciences of some good men. But inasmuch as we see, that Christ's prohibition in our text, general as it is, is only levelled against profane and needless swearing in conversation ;

verſation ; ſince Chriſt himſelf answered S E R M.  
upon oath at his own trial for his life, even III.  
when he knew that trial would end in the   
putting him to death ; ſince we have ex-  
amples of the moſt pious men, both in the  
old and new teſtament, in the uſe of an  
oath ; and ſince a new teſtament writer in-  
troduces God himſelf, as acting herein after  
the manner of men, for the confirmation of  
a truth : we may, I think, be very well  
ſatisfied, that the words of the text were  
never deſigned to forbid the religious uſe, but  
only the irreligious perverting of an oath.

FROM the whole of our text we learn  
this important truth, which was only inti-  
mated in the beginning of my diſcourſe :  
that a reverence of God, a deep ſenſe of his  
exact inſpection of our hearts and actions,  
his perfect purity, his mighty power, and  
our accountableneſs to this wiſe and ho-  
ly and powerful being, are neceſſary to  
keep us even from thoſe degrees of pro-  
faneneſs, of which we think ourſelves in  
no danger : and that if we would be ſe-  
cure from abuſing the holy name of God  
in the groſſeſt manner, and would never  
be under a temptation to perjury itſelf ;  
we muſt religiously take care, not to uſe  
his name upon trifles in our common con-  
verſation.

AND when once by ſuch conſiderations  
we have brought ourſelves to a good habit,  
we

SERM. we shall feel, that by the same means we  
 III. have gained a great advantage, towards dis-  
 charging all those duties which relate im-  
 mediately to God himself; we shall then  
 be always in a better frame for pouring out  
 our souls to him in prayer for the blessings  
 we want, and in thanksgiving for those we  
 have received; we shall be able to meditate  
 at any time with infinitely greater profit  
 and comfort, than we could possibly do, if  
 we came from discoursing irreverently con-  
 cerning that supreme being, who deserves  
 our highest veneration. Nor is there any  
 doubt, but that hereby we shall be rendered  
 more fit and more ready to do good a-  
 mong men: we shall teach them by our  
 example a reverence of God: we shall be  
 effectually secured from daring to injure  
 those, who are the workmanship of that  
 God, and the care of his providence, whom  
 we ourselves so much honour; and we  
 shall find ourselves obliged, out of a reve-  
 rent regard to him, to shew a kind respect  
 to them. So nearly are the great branches  
 of our duty related to each other! so  
 closely connected together! Let us there-  
 fore make it our business, to maintain and  
 to increase in our minds this reverence:  
 and let us shew it, not in the church on-  
 ly, when we are assembled together in the  
 solemn presence of God; but in the whole  
 course of our actions.

S E R-



## S E R M O N IV.

Of sound doctrine.

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T I T. ii. 1.

*But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.*

U Ncharitable controversies among christians have occasioned such different interpretations of the phrases, *sound doctrine*, *sound speech*, and *soundness in the faith*; and at the same time, many of those who understood these phrases better than their neighbours have in the course of their actions had so little regard to that true *soundness*, which these expressions are chiefly designed to recommend; that, to prevent mistakes, it is well worth our while to make a particular enquiry into their meaning; and of much greater importance, to excite ourselves to the willing compliance with those duties, which *sound doctrine* requires of us. And these are the two things, which I shall now offer to your consideration.

I. I SHALL



SERM. I. I SHALL enquire, what is meant in  
 IV. the new testament by *sound doctrine*, and  
 ~~~~~ other expressions of the like kind.

IF controversy had not perverted the use of words, one would think, that by *sound doctrine* should readily be understood that which leads men to and confirms them in *that wholesome course of life*, which is the best proof of a *sound mind*. And this, I believe, will be found to be the true meaning of all those passages in the new testament, where any such expression is used. 'Tis certain, this is agreeable to other passages, both in the old and new testament, which represent men as brought by sin into a distempered condition, a state of sickness; who need to be restored to health and soundness. This is the evident meaning of the prophet *Isaiab*, i. 5, 6. where, speaking of a *sinful nation*, and a *people laden with iniquity*, he says: *The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.* And the same was evidently our Saviour's meaning, *Mat.* ix. 12, 13. when he answered the invidious reflexion of the *Pharisees*, upon his eating with publicans and sinners: *They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.--- I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners,*

to repentance. Nothing can be plainer than SERM.
that the *sickness*, of which our Lord here IV.
spoke, was the sinful condition of those *pub-*
licans and other remarkable *sinners*, with
whom he conversed, in order to take the op-
portunity of curing their diseased minds ;
that the bringing them to *repentance* was
the cure he proposed ; and that the method
he took for it was the ministring a *salutary*
doctrine to them, a doctrine calculated and
designed for rescuing men from the love and
practice of sin, to the love and practice of ho-
liness.

THE brief mention of these things may
be useful, towards explaining the true sense
of all those passages, where *soundness* is spoken
of. However, the surest way to judge of
any writer's meaning is, to consider the cir-
cumstances, with which his words are in-
troduced. And in this view I shall lay be-
fore you those few passages, where *soundness*
is, in the new testament, applied to *doctrine*,
or *speech*, or *faith*. So far as I can find,
they are only in the writings of the apostle
Paul ; and particularly in his epistles to *Ti-*
mothy and *Titus*.

As for our text itself: its connexion with
the end of the preceding chapter, and the
whole train of argument after the text,
plainly refer to the practice of what is mo-
rally good. *But speak thou the things which*
G *become*

SERMON. *become sound doctrine*: that is to say; speak

IV. those things, which become a *wholesome* doctrine, a doctrine whose tendency is to make men *sound*, and to keep them so. The apostle had in these words a manifest reference to some, who spoke or acted *things which did not become sound doctrine*. And they are those mentioned in the last verse of the preceding chapter: *who professed that they knew God, but in works denied him; being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*; men, who pretended to have a very accurate knowledge of the mind of God, and had the highest conceit of themselves for this their supposed knowledge; but who acted quite contrary to God's declared mind.

BUT if we go a little farther back into the first chapter, we shall see the whole connexion of the apostle's discourse, and have the opportunity of considering some other expressions, of like import with that in our text. Let it therefore be observed: that St. Paul having, from ver. 6th to the 9th, laid before the evangelist *Titus* the qualifications of those, whom he would have him to ordain *bishops* or *elders* in the cities of *Crete*; in the ninth verse proceeds to tell him; that the *elder* or *bishop* must be such a one, as *holds fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught*; that he may be able, by *sound doctrine*,

εἰς τὴν διδασκαλίαν τῆς ὑγιανέουσης.

Of sound doctrine.

83

doctrines, both to exhort, and to convince gain-
sayers. SERM.
IV.

THIS is the first place, wherein the phrase of *sound doctrine* is mentioned in this epistle. And from the following cautions, against *unruly and vain-talkers and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake*, ver. 10, 11; from the character given of the *Cretans*, ver. 12. as *liars, evil beasts, and slow bellies*; and from the advice immediately subjoined in ver. 13. *to rebuke them sharply, that they might be found in the faith*; it appears at least very probable, that in this expression, *sound doctrine*, the apostle had chiefly a regard to the *holiness* of the christian religion, and its tendency to *purifie the heart*. To this purpose it is, that in another place, (1 Tim. vi. 3.) he makes *wholesome words*, or *sound words*, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, to mean the same thing as, *the doctrine which is according to godliness*.

THIS was the *sound doctrine*, by which the christian bishops were *to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers* of Christ's religion. Not that the apostle would confine them only to the recommending of moral duties: but that their preaching such doctrine, as the grand design of the christian religion, would

G 2

be

† ὁμοιωσι, the same word as in our text.

SERM. be a proof of their *soundness*, and was the
 IV. very thing which would denominate them
 ~~~~~ *sound*.

IT is indeed the opinion of some learned men, that by the *faithful word*, and the *sound doctrine*, mentioned *Tit. i. 9.* are meant some brief form or scheme of christian religion, supposed to have been in use in the apostle's days: which opinion they ground upon the exhortation of this same apostle to his son *Timothy*, 2 *Tim. i. 13.* *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.* But if there had been any such certain *forms of words* in those early days; yet what was it, that could give them the denomination of *sound words*, *sound doctrine*, or *teaching*? What else could it be, than the direct and natural tendency of the doctrine, to restore sinners from their diseased condition, and to preserve the soul in a *healthful* state? And how justly does the scheme of Christ's gospel, in its native simplicity, deserve this character? when the very end which it proposeth to itself is, *by faith to purifie the heart*, *Acts xv. 9.* to rescue the soul from the power of corrupt affections, and to make it partaker of the divine holiness.

THE mention of *native simplicity* leads me to observe, that some have thought the characters of *faithful word*, and *sound doctrine*,  
 were

were in early times given to the true doctrine of Christ, in opposition to the corruptions, which some teachers endeavoured to blend with it. And it is favourable to this opinion; that presently after the mention of these characters, *Tit. i. 9.* the apostle warns *Titus* chiefly against those *vain-talkers and deceivers, who were of the circumcision*: who, 'tis certain, did endeavour to blend the ceremonies of the *Jewish* law, and the traditions of its teachers, with the pure doctrine of Christ, representing that doctrine as imperfect without them, and incapable to conduct men to happiness. And to the same purpose, having, in ver. 13. advised *Titus* sharply to rebuke the Cretans, that they might be sound in the faith, he adds immediately the caution, *not to give heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn from the truth.* But when the apostle, in ver. 10, 11. calls these men *unruly talkers and deceivers*, on account of the corrupt doctrine they taught; and charges them with *subverting whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake*: 'tis plain what was his thought concerning *soundness* and *unsoundness* in doctrine: 'tis plain, that his concern was about these mens directing their hearers to something, which was of an immoral nature, and consequently of an *unwholesome* tendency, quite opposite to that of Christ's gospel; and this was the reason of

SERM.  
IV.

SERM. his earnest warnings against them. Parti-

IV. cularly, it was for the indulgence, which  
 these mens doctrine gave to sinful courses,  
 such as are directly opposite to the purity of  
 Christ's gospel, that he exhorted *Titus to re-*  
*buke them sharply, that they might be sound*  
*in the faith.*

THE very naming of this exhortation,  
 one would think, should be sufficient to  
 shew, that, in the apostle's mind, *soundness*  
 related to practice. How else was any man to  
 be made *sound in the faith by a sharp<sup>e</sup> rebuke*?  
 What tendency is there in a *sharp rebuke*, to  
 make a man alter his speculative opinions,  
 or recede from his mistaken notions? But  
 consider *soundness* as relating to practice: and  
 then a sharp rebuke, prudently administred  
 by a man who is himself clear of the fault  
 he reproves, may probably be the means of  
 reclaiming from an evil course, provided the  
 heart be not quite hardned. For the guilty  
 man's own conscience is of the party with  
 the reprover, and testifies to the righteouf-  
 ness and fitness of the reproof: and conse-  
 quently tends to bring him to those serious  
 reflexions, which may be the means of re-  
 storing him to a *healthful* habit and dispo-  
 sition

<sup>e</sup> ἔλεγχε ἀπολόμως. The use of the verb ἐλέγω, in  
 this place, answers very well to the use of it in the last  
 verse of the next chapter; where the apostle directs *Titus*  
*to rebuke with all authority, ἐλεγχε μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς.*  
 In both places it seems to carry a sense somewhat differ-  
 ent from meer reasoning and arguing.

sition of mind, conformed to the pure and holy doctrine of the blessed Jesus. S E R M.  
IV.

IN the two last verses of this first chapter to *Titus*, the apostle pursues his argument about *soundness* by observing, that *unto the pure all things are pure; but unto the defiled and unbelieving*, (those who in favour of their beloved lusts will refuse assent to credible evidence) *nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled*: and that *while they profess to know God, in works they deny him; being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*.

IN these words the apostle declares the insufficiency of speculation, or of any thing else short of real virtue and goodness, to make a man truly *sound*. And 'tis with these, that our text is immediately connected: *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine*. And a very cursory view of the particulars contained in this general exhortation will shew, that by the *things which become sound doctrine* the apostle meant the practice of moral duties.

THERE can, I think, be no reasonable doubt, that by the *sound doctrine* itself, of which the apostle speaks in this first verse of the chapter, he meant the same, which in the tenth verse he calls the *doctrine of God our Saviour*, which christians are *to adorn in all things*; and which in the very next words he describes by the name of *the salutary*



SERM. *lutary grace of God*<sup>h</sup>, an expression very near

IV. of kin to that of *soundness*. Let us now examine what the apostle himself, in the following verses, declares this *salutary grace* was designed to teach us: and then we shall see in his own words what he means by *sound doctrine*.

HE tells us: that this *grace of God*, which is <sup>i</sup> *salutary to all*, that is to say, calculated to restore, and to preserve in a healthful condition of soul, persons of all nations and of every rank in life, *both appeared*, or been made manifest; *teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the*<sup>k</sup> *appearing of the glory of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ*. This was evidently designed by the apostle, as a brief representation of the whole christian religion, with regard to the duties which it chiefly insists on, and the grand motive, by which it enforces and encourages the practice of those duties. The whole, we see, is practical: beginning with repentance, which is here described by *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*; going on in the constant tenour of a *sober, righteous and godly life*; and the whole course of action, from the be-

<sup>h</sup> Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος.  
ἀνθρώποις. <sup>i</sup> Σωτήριος πᾶσαν  
<sup>k</sup> Ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ,  
καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

beginning to the end, is supported by the S E R M. clear view of a blessed immortality. And IV. what immediately follows in ver. 14. is as practical, though relating to that one point, which may justly be called the most peculiar of the whole christian doctrine. The apostle affirms; that the end and design, for which our blessed Lord gave himself for us, was, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

HAVING thus gained the knowledge of what the apostle means by the *sound doctrine* in our text; we shall easily see, by considering the words which immediately follow, that *the things which become this sound doctrine*, are such as naturally flow from it, in the sense above represented.

IN our text, which is the first verse of the chapter, the apostle exhorts *Titus* in a general way, to *speake the things which become sound doctrine*: then he enters immediately into the particular duties, suited to persons of different ages and stations in life, as instances of what he intended thereby. In ver. 2. he mentions the duties more especially becoming *the aged men*: the three first whereof, that is to say, *sobriety, gravity and temperance*, are most evidently moral characters. And whereas it is further required of them, that that they be <sup>1</sup> *sound in faith,*  
*in*

<sup>1</sup> ὀρθόδοξος, the same word which in our text is applied to *doctrine*.

SERM. *in love, and in patience*; two of these cha-

IV. *acters* are likewise evidently moral. As for the *soundness in faith*, here spoken of; if the true meaning should be a steady regard to that christian doctrine, which these *aged men* had long professed, and an exemplary adherence to it in its native simplicity, without admitting corrupt mixtures, as some did: yet even this has a near relation to a moral character, if it be not in itself such a character; because the corrupting or defiling any doctrine with what does not belong to it, or is not properly consistent with it, is certainly immoral.

IN ver. 3, 4, 5. are contained the duties of the *aged women*, together with what they were to teach the *younger*: all which are easily seen to be only of a moral nature. In ver. 6. *young men* are exhorted to be *sober-minded*; which is certainly a moral character.

IN ver. 6, 7, 8. *Titus* himself, who is considered as one of the *younger men*, (and whose own duties are, with great propriety, mentioned by the apostle before he descends to the case of *servants*) is exhorted to *shew himself in all things a pattern of good works*; which exhortation is intirely of a piece with what goes before. And whereas there are several things added, relating to *doctrine*; such as *uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and sound speech, which cannot be condemned*: they

are all such characters, as his ministerial office, which he had taken upon him, had made to be moral characters to him ; characters, from which if he departed, he must be an immoral man. SERM.  
IV.

BUT the recommending to *Titus*, as a minister, <sup>m</sup> *sound speech which cannot be condemned*, deserves a particular notice, because of its near relation to our text, and likewise because of the declared end for which the exhortation is given ; *that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you*. For this plainly shews, that by *sound speech* the apostle means practical preaching ; that is, the recommendation of those things, in the course of the ministry, which are good in their own nature, and tend to make men good ; and which do so strongly approve themselves to the consciences of men in general, that the enemies of christianity must acknowledge the *soundness* of such doctrine when preached by a christian, and cannot find in their hearts to condemn it. Moreover it is somewhat remarkable ; that in these verses the apostle speaks of *uncorruptness of doctrine*, and of *sound speech*, as two distinct things. Whereby it should seem, that by *uncorruptness* he meant the original simplicity and purity of the *faith*, as *once delivered to the saints*, without the addition of any corrupt mixtures ;

<sup>m</sup> Λόγον ὑγιῆ.



SERM. tures; and by *soundness*, that special regard  
 IV. to good moral practice, to which the same  
 word, in other places, has so visible and immediate a relation.

IN the 9th and 10th verses are mentioned the moral duties of *servants*; together with the reason why they, as christians, should perform these duties, and why all the other persons beforementioned, considered likewise as christians, should perform the several duties required of them; which is, *that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

AND it is immediately upon this, that in the verses already considered, the apostle declares, what were the things which *the salutary grace of God was intended to teach us*; and what the great end, for which our blessed Lord *gave himself for us*: which I need not now repeat. These things, the apostle, in the last verse of the chapter, afresh calls upon *Titus to speak and to exhort*; and *to rebuke with all authority* them who should oppose such doctrine.

THIS particular account I thought proper to give, concerning all the places in the epistle to *Titus*, where *soundness in faith and doctrine* are mentioned; that by comparing them together we might the more clearly see their meaning. And having already quoted one or two passages out of the epistles to *Timothy*, there remain in the whole  
 new

new testament only two texts more, where SERM.  
 such expressions are used. One of these is, IV.  
 1 Tim. i. 9, 10, 11. where the immoralities  
 which are mentioned by the apostle, as *con-*  
*trary to sound doctrine*, will go a great way  
 towards proving, that *the sound doctrine* itself,  
 to which they are *contrary*, is of a moral kind.  
*The law is not made for a righteous man, but*  
*for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly*  
*and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for*  
*murderers of fathers and murderers of mo-*  
*thers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for*  
*them that defile themselves with mankind, for*  
*men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons,*  
*and if there be any other thing that is contrary*  
*to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gos-*  
*pel of the blessed God.*

THE other text is, 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3, 4.  
*Preach the word; be instant, in season, out*  
*of season; reprove; exhort, with all long-*  
*suffering and doctrine: for the time will come,*  
*when they will not endure sound doctrine; but*  
*after their own lusts will heap to themselves*  
*teachers, having itching ears; and they will*  
*turn away their ears from the truth, and*  
*will be turned unto fables.* Now nothing, I  
 think, can be more plain, than that the  
*sound doctrine* here mentioned, which some  
 would not be able to endure, was such as  
 had an immediate relation to practice. The  
 people here described were such, as could  
 suffer their curiosity to be raised, and their  
ears

SERM. ears tickled, but would not bear to be told

IV. their duty. This curiosity, and those *itching ears*, are plainly opposed to that *sound doctrine*, which carries in it *exhortations* to duty, and *reproofs* to the violation or neglect of it.

AND if you compare this with all the other passages before quoted, you will find : that by *sound doctrine* is meant, not such as consists in difficult speculations, but the contrary ; an acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, as sent of God to be our saviour and ruler ; and in pursuance hereof, an obedience to the preceptive will of God delivered by him, and the hope of happiness, founded on the promise made to all who should persevere in such obedience. This is the whole of that *sound doctrine* which the apostle recommends : and 'tis remarkable, that its close connexion with the moral duties we owe to God, and to each other, is the very thing, which, according to the apostle's account, gives it the character of *soundness* ; the departure from a good course of life is that which denominates a man *unsound in the faith* ; and directions are given for *rebuking* those who thus depart from their duty, that thereby *they might become sound in the faith*.

How very different is this account, which you have now seen largely set before you, from the notion some good christians have entertained concerning *sound doctrine*, and  
*sound-*

*soundness in the faith?* How intirely do a SERM.  
 great number of christians make *soundness in* IV.  
*the faith* to consist in their own particular  
 explication of certain speculative doctrines,  
 for which they think they have scripture on  
 their side, and which yet other sincere christians,  
 with all their most diligent search cannot find there? How very positive have  
 some christians been, that their explications  
 of certain texts, which they think relate to  
 the decrees of God concerning particular  
 persons, and of other texts, which they believe  
 relate to the nature and essence of their  
 glorious redeemer, are the very things in  
 which *soundness* consists? whereas, by the  
 account which has been given, upon considering  
 every single text where *soundness* is mentioned,  
 it appears, that there is in most, if not in all of them,  
 an immediate view to the practice of a good life;  
 and in some places an expresse distinction made  
 between true *soundness in the faith*, and the  
 engaging in difficult speculations. How agreeable  
 is this account of *sound doctrine* with St. John's  
 declaring, 1 John v. 1. that *whosoever believeth  
 that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*; and  
 with St. Paul's praying, that *grace may be  
 with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ  
 in sincerity*, Eph. vi. 24. And how clear a  
 case is it, that men may from their very heart  
 and soul *believe that Jesus is the Christ*; and  
 may embrace and obey him in that character,  
 who



SERMON. who yet understand little or nothing of the  
 IV. controversy about his nature and essence?

And how clear likewise, that men may love the Lord Jesus Christ with the utmost sincerity of their hearts; and yet remain ignorant which side to take in that controversy; or in the other, relating to the designed extent of his death, or the decrees of God concerning particular persons?

LET these thoughts, my brethren, determine us to peace and love towards each other; and towards all those professed christians, who by the *soundness* of their practice give proof of the *soundness of their faith*. Let us ask ourselves, whether we can in earnest believe, that any of those shall be disowned from being Christ's disciples, who solemnly profess to own him for their saviour and ruler, and do in the course of their lives yield a conformity to his precepts. Let it be allowed, that they are attended with some great mistakes: yet, according to the account which the apostle Paul gives of *soundness*, will not their obedience to Christ prove their *faith* in him to be *sound*? Can their mistakes in speculation prove them *unsound*, in the sense in which the apostle uses that word? Does not the apostle's account make rottenness of heart, testified by a wicked course of life in a professed christian, the proof of *unsoundness in the faith*? And shall we be so presumptuous, as to affirm, that all

all those are rotten at heart, who cannot SERM.  
come up to our explications of some parti- IV.  
cular doctrines ?

IF therefore we have at any time, in the heat of contention, carried our notion of *soundness in the faith* too far ; let the account which has been laid before us reconcile our affection to those, from whom we have stood at an unkind distance ; and teach us with the apostle to pray, that *grace may be with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*

BUT the mention of these things leads me

II. To exhort you to the practice of those duties in general, *which become sound doctrine.*

By the several expressions used by the apostle, throughout the chapter wherein is our text, and in that which follows, you see what these duties are. You see them summed up in *living soberly, righteously and godly in the present world.* And nothing is more evident, than that the plainest and most simple account of the christian faith, such as directs us to acknowledge Jesus as our saviour and ruler, in the hope of eternal life, which he has promised in his father's name, has an immediate tendency to this course of life. But the difficulty is to get men to embrace this doctrine in their hearts : and till it is settled there, its genuine effects will never

H

appear

SERM. appear in their practice, let their heads be

IV. ever so well furnished with right notions.

Meer knowledge, we have seen, will never prove a man *sound in the faith*. Nor will the scripture allow that character to any other than those, who practise *the things which become sound doctrine*. Nay further : let a man be ever so well acquainted with the speculative parts of the christian doctrine, and profess to believe them ever so strongly ; yet if he wholly disregards the practice of his duty as a christian, his knowledge, attended with this disregard to practice, will, instead of proving him *sound*, make him hurtful and pernicious to the interests of that holy religion, which he so much abuses.

To what purpose serves the right understanding of that *salutary doctrine, which teaches us to live soberly* ; if, contrary to the dictates of this right understanding, we allow ourselves in an intemperate course, and think it beneath us to restrain any inordinate affection, or refuse to say or do any thing in behalf of our religion, that might disoblige a vicious companion ? If we think it of such importance, to keep well with that sort of acquaintance, which will make a mock at religious restraints, as not to dare to signify our dislike of their conduct ; let our knowledge be what it will, our hearts are *unsound*, and our *faith* is not of the right kind. That indeed is no *faith in God*, which is over-

over-ruled by *the fear of men*. And if the *sound doctrine* we pretend to entertain has no effect upon us; we only expose ourselves by boasting of it. SERM. IV.

IN like manner, what are we the better for understanding clearly, and being able to discourse methodically, upon that holy doctrine, which *teaches us to live righteously*, with regard to our neighbours, and to do kind offices for them; if with all this clear understanding, and readiness for discoursing, we allow ourselves to be injurious to our neighbours, or refuse to shew that kindness to them, which ourselves would desire from them if we wanted it? The apostle *James* made a just and wise conclusion in this latter case, of with-holding needful relief from the naked and destitute, *Jam. ii. 15, 16, 17.* when he observed, that *faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*. And if the want of shewing needful kindness to the distressed will prove our faith to be *unsound*; what shall we say of direct violations of *justice* in our dealings, or the intire disregard of those relative duties, whereby we are bound to consult each others welfare and comfort? Where is the *soundness* of that *faith*, which has no effect here? And to what purpose would it be, for a man, who is guilty in these respects, to boast of his regard to *sound doctrine*?

AGAIN; to what purpose serves our  
H 2
right



SERM. right understanding of that *sound doctrine*,

IV. which *teaches us to live godly in the world*,  
 ~~~~~ to maintain always a reverent sense of the  
 divine being, and a hearty affection to him,
 and to discover both in the course of our
 actions; if with all our right understand-
 ing we give no proofs of this reverent and
 affectionate sense of him? If we can allow
 ourselves in the stated neglect of that reli-
 gious worship, whereby *sound doctrine* re-
 quires us to shew respect to God; if in
 conversation we can sit unconcerned at the
 profane ridicule, which some are pleased to
 cast upon religion in general; and much
 more, if we can allow ourselves to join in
 that ridicule: we may value ourselves as much
 as we will for understanding *sound doctrine*;
 but we ourselves are not *found in the faith*.
 I do not see indeed how such men can be
 said to have any *faith in God*: I am sure it
 is not such a *faith* as the gospel requires.
 And yet there are some, who value them-
 selves for their knowledge of the christian
 religion, and contemn others; who are no-
 toriously guilty of neglecting divine wor-
 ship; and who out of complaisance will
 join with a profane ridicule, rather than shew
 any displeasure at it. But till the principle
 of true *godliness* is better settled in the heart,
 than to allow of such a course in life, men
 can never be said to follow *the things which*
become sound doctrine.

THERE

THERE was, it seems, when the apostle SERM.
wrote to *Titus* the exhortation in our text, IV.

a need of his *speaking* and earnestly recommending *the things which become sound doctrine*. And so 'tis certain there is at this day; particularly with regard to this principle of *godliness*. Men run from one extreme to another: and because some have in former times been ready to place the whole of religion in acts of worship, and in promoting religious conversation; others seem now to aim at casting all worship out of the notion of religion, are quite ashamed to enter into any religious converse, and would fain make the whole of religion to consist in relative duties among men, which are no doubt a considerable part of it. But if some have neglected or acted contrary to their relative duties, while they have made a mighty pretence to *religion towards God*; that is no reason why we should cast all immediate regards to God out of our religion, for the sake of relative duties. The first principle of religion, if we will take our Saviour's own account of it, is *to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength*. And no other principle can so effectually lead us to *the love of our neighbour*, and the discharge of all the duties we owe him, as this of *love to God*. Now where this is firmly rooted in the heart, it will surely discover itself in a reverent manner of

SERM. conversing concerning God and divine things,

IV. and likewise in delighting to offer up our
 addresses to himself, and to hear the instructions of his word.

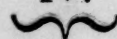
THE sum of what I have been saying is this. There are two kinds of offenders against *sound doctrine*. The one are those, who are so eagerly concerned for certain particular notions, which have long been accounted tests of *soundness*, as to forget and neglect their relative duties, and almost intirely to lay aside the practice of christian charity, with regard to such as dare to differ from them. The other are those, who think themselves much better acquainted with the true scheme of christian doctrine; but instead of following the plain directions of it, despise their brethren, and by that contempt incur the very same danger of neglecting charitable offices: and if they do shew a better regard to some relative duties than their neighbours do, yet value themselves so much upon this, as to fit loose to what is most properly called religion towards God. There are indeed on both sides, to the great scandal of the christian profession, those who are deficient in the duties of *sobriety*, of *righteousness*, and of *godliness*; each party blinded by their high opinion of themselves, as to the rightness of their sentiments in disputable matters. I am loth to say which party gives the deepest wound

wound to the true interest of christianity. SERM.
But this I am sure of: that if the uncharitableness of some has done unspeakable mischief in one respect; the contempt conceived by others, and that prevailing levity and unconcernedness for the interest of christianity, which appear in the course of their conversation, do unspeakable mischief in another respect. Both sides want to be put in mind of *the things which become sound doctrine*; and to be persuaded to practise the several parts of their duty as christians, from a principle of *faith* in him, whom they call their *lord* and *master*. IV.

BUT alas, how difficult is the work of persuading men, who have entertained so high an opinion of themselves? How hopeless is the undertaking? Speak to them of christian principles! they understand them sufficiently already: they do not want to be told their duty. Nay some have gone so far, as to pretend, that by their privilege as believers, they are exempted from any other obligation, than what their own sense of gratitude lays upon them. And yet the other side are no less culpable, while the high opinion of their own knowledge leads them to the neglect of God, and the contempt of their brethren.

BUT let us all consider; that it is not the knowledge of the christian doctrine, or the entertaining right sentiments of the more

S E R M. difficult parts of it, that will ever secure to

IV. us the happiness it promises to the faithful.
 Jesus Christ *becomes the author of eternal sal-*

Heb. v. 9. *vation only to those who obey him.* We may
 call him *Lord, Lord*; and have such a *faith*,
 as to *work miracles*; and yet be made to de-

Mat. vii.
 21, 22, 23. *part from him, as workers of iniquity.* They
 only are *sound in the faith*, and they only
 will be acknowledged as such, who practise
the things which become sound doctrine; who
 sincerely believing in Jesus Christ, as ap-
 pointed of God to be their saviour and ruler,
 do not only hope for salvation through him,
 but faithfully obey his precepts without re-
 serve. These are the *sound christians*: and
 so far as any of us depart from this charac-
 ter, we are corrupt; and shall speed accord-
 ingly, when we come to be tried by our
 great judge. Let us bethink ourselves, in
 time, of the consequences of that judgment
 day. The persons, of whom I have been
 speaking, do by their conduct seem to think,
 as if the chief thing to be tried at the last
 day were exactness of judgment in matters
 of speculation. But the new testament
 teaches us quite another doctrine, in its re-
 presentations of that important procedure.
 The passage in *Mat. vii.* turns upon *doing*
 or not doing *the will of our heavenly Father*.
 That in *Mat. xxv.* turns upon performing or
 neglecting works of beneficence. The apostle
 writing to the *Thessalonians*, 2. i. 8. speaks of

a vengeance to those who obey not the gospel SERM.
of Christ. And the writer to the Hebrews, IV.

in the place just now quoted, tells them
of Christ's becoming the author of eternal
salvation to those who obey him. These pas-
sages give a sufficient explication of those
other, wherein Christ promises eternal life
to such as believe in him, and threatens de-
struction to those who believe not. For
hereby it appears, that the faith spoken of
is understood to be an operative faith, such
as produces obedience. And such a faith
as this is very consistent with taking the one
side or the other, in most controversies that
have ever been among christians. This is a
sufficient reason, why we should avoid rash
judging and condemning on the one side,
and contempt on the other; and why we
should encourage each other in seeking glory,
honour and immortality, through a patient con-
tinuance in well doing; the happy consequence
whereof, the apostle assures us, *Rom. ii. 7.*
will be eternal life.





S E R M O N V.

The true meaning of the command,
to love God.

M A T. xxii. 37, 38.

Jesus said unto him : thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind : this is the first and great commandment.

TH E S E words of our Lord are an answer to a question, put to him by one of the Pharisees who was a lawyer, with the design of ensnaring him. They had, but a little before, tried him in another manner, by putting such a question, as they expected would make him either obnoxious to the Roman government, or odious to his countrymen the Jews : *What thinkest thou? is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?* This, we are told by the evangelist, ver. 15. was the effect of a consultation held by the
Pha-

Pharisees, on purpose to intangle him in his SERM.
talk: and it was, in concert with the ser- V.
vants of king *Herod*, introduced with a most

plausible speech, in commendation of his integrity in teaching the way of God, ver. 16.

But *Jesus* perceived their wickedness; and avoided their snare in such a manner, as left them for the present quite confounded; so that they left him and went their way. 'Tis

remarkable, that the same day the *Sadducees* came to him, and put a question relating to the resurrection, a doctrine, which it was well known they derided; whereby they shewed, that they did not desire information, but only wanted to expose him. So well were *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* agreed together in their opposition against Christ's holy doctrine, though they widely differed from each other! But the *Sadducees* were as much disappointed in the answer to their question, as the *Pharisees* had been in the answer to theirs! Yet this silencing of the *Sadducees*, we find, in the verses immediately before our text, was the express occasion of the *Pharisees* gathering together again, and tempting *Jesus* afresh, by that question to which the text is an answer; *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?*

THE answer which our Lord gave was, like those which preceded, such as threw his enemies into confusion: but, what was of infinitely more importance, and was indeed

SERM. deed his chief view, it laid the foundation
 V. for the most useful reflections that could
 employ their minds ; such as tended to regulate the whole course of their lives, and to prepare them for that felicity, for which in their present disposition they were wholly unfit. And whatever might be the disposition of the person who put the question ; whether his brethren knew him to be a man of more integrity than themselves, and made him the instrument of their ensnaring designs ; or whether our Lord's answer had an immediate good effect upon him ; we find in the parallel place, *Mar. xii.* that he assented to the truth and wisdom of our Lord's answer in such a manner, that our Lord thereupon said to him, *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*

The reply which the lawyer had given was this : *Mar. xii. 32, 33. Well, master, thou hast said the truth : for there is one God, and there is none else but he : and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.* This confession was that, which Christ acknowledged as a good foundation for receiving his doctrine. And the mention of this shews very probably, that the question to which our text is an answer was much agitated among the *Jews* ; and that

that many were of opinion, that a punctual S E R M. observance of ritual precepts, and particularly V. ly of those which related to sacrifice, was the chief duty required by the law of God.

THIS appears to have been the delusion of many of the *Jews*, and particularly of the *Pharisees*. From which delusion the words of our Saviour tended to rescue them; by leading them to that inward principle of sincere and fervent affection to the divine being, which would engage to universal and unreserved obedience in the course of action; and would teach them to lay a greater stress upon that internal holiness, which would have a necessary influence on the whole conduct, than upon the exact performance of certain outward actions, wherein a hypocrite may be as punctual as the most pious man upon earth.

THIS is the general view of the text. In discoursing on which I shall

I. ENQUIRE what is meant by the *love of God*; and particularly by those descriptions of it which our Lord here mentions.

II. SHEW, that this *love of God* is indeed *the first and great commandment of his law*.

I. I AM to enquire, what is meant by *the love of God*; and particularly by those descriptions of it, which our Lord mentions in the text.

Love is that delight which we take in any object, on account of something good or excellent

SERM. cellent which we apprehend to be in it, and

V. that desire which we have in our minds towards it, as tending to make us happy. And the more of good or excellent we apprehend to be in the object, the higher is likely to be the degree of our affection. It receives great variation from the nature of the object loved. Where the object is a being capable of knowing the affection borne towards it, *love* always includes the desire of being agreeable to it. Where the object is capable of receiving any benefit, the *love* includes also a desire of its happiness. And even where there is no room for such desire, it will be attended with a delight and joy in its happiness, as being already perfect. There is an unavoidable difference with regard to the superiority or inferiority of the loved object. For though the apostle *John* says very truly, 1 *John* iv. 18. that *perfect love casteth out fear*, that is, slavish fear; yet if the object loved be very much superiour, let the affection towards it be ever so sincere and ever so fervent, it will of course, in any intelligent subject, be attended with that reverence, which cannot enter into the mind with regard to an equal or an inferiour. Yet further: that *love* which is suited to our condition includes the principle of gratitude: and the more valuable are the benefits received, and the quicker sense the mind retains of those benefits; so much the stronger

command, to love God.

III

Stronger will be the affection towards the SERM.
benefactor. V.

APPLY these general thoughts to the relation we bear to the author and disposer of all things, our creator and governour and constant benefactor; and it will easily be seen, what kind of *love* that is, which we owe to him.

BUT the descriptions contained in our text will best teach us the particulars included in that affection, which is due from us to the blessed God.

LET it therefore be observed; that both in the text, and in the parallel place in St. *Mark*, the *love* which God requires of us is such, as is directed by the *understanding* and judgment; which in both places is expressed by the word *διάνοια*, in our text translated, *mind*. And what is expressed in *Mark* xii. 30. by this word *διάνοια*, is in ver. 33. expressed by the word *σύνεσις*, which we translate *understanding*. It is therefore our Saviour's meaning; that we should *love God* with such an affection as is directed by the *understanding*, by the best use of our *judgment* and *conscience*; in reflecting upon the perfections of his nature, and his conduct towards his creatures and subjects, and towards ourselves in particular. In this respect we are obliged to *love God with all our understanding*; besides that we are to employ our *understanding* in enquiring after the

SERM. the best and wisest ways of expressing our
 V. *love* to him in the course of our actions.

THE other expressions, of loving God *with all the heart, and with all the soul*, I make no question contain this meaning ; that we should love him with the greatest sincerity, and likewise with the utmost ardour and fervency ; giving to him our affections without reserve, and loving him above all other objects, as he deserves our affection above all other. It is very probable, that by *loving God with all the heart*, the one is meant, and the other by *loving him with all the soul* : but by which of these expressions sincerity is meant, and by which the high degree of affection, is not so easy to determine, because the *heart* is in scripture sometimes used to signify the one, and sometimes the other. But there can be no doubt, that in *loving God with all the heart and with all the soul* are included, both the sincerity and the high degree of affection ; because when our Lord was describing that *love of the divine being*, which is *the first and great commandment*, and the substance of all religion, he could not be supposed to leave out these two important qualifications of it.

THIS degree of affection towards God ^a some have carried to such a height, as to make it altogether exclusive of any other object ;

^a Particularly the pious and ingenious Mr. Norris ;
 Serm. I. of Vol. III.

object ; grounding their opinion upon the great strength of the expression, *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*, and the great difference between this love, and the *loving our neighbour as ourselves*. They will not therefore allow any delight or complacency in, or even the lowest degree of desire after, any thing short of God ; or that there is any thing in all the whole creation so good or excellent, as to justify our placing the least degree of affection upon it, or to clear us therein from the sin of idolatry.

S E R M.

V.

BUT these good men, in the height of their zeal to glorify God, carry the lofty expressions in our text into a meaning which was never intended by them ; a meaning, which is indeed inconsistent with the condition wherein God has placed us, and the relation he himself has made us to bear towards each other, and with that very command which follows in the next words, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*.

WE love God^o *with all our heart and soul*, we give him our whole heart and our whole soul, when we suffer nothing to come into competition with the affection we bear unto him ; when we reject whatever would carry the appearance of a rival, or break in upon that obedience, which is the natural

^o This thought is beautifully expressed by the hon. Mr. Boyle, in his treatise of *seraphic love*, pag. 8, 25, 26. edit. 2d, 1661.

SERM. consequent of affection to such a being as

V. God is; when we make all other affections
 give way to that which we bear towards
 him. And all this we may do, very consistently with loving the creatures in their proper place and degree. But it is impossible to reconcile the two commands, of *loving God*, and *loving our neighbour*, if love to the one must be exclusive of love to the other. They could not surely in our Saviour's mind be so widely different, when he affirmed, that *the second command was like unto the first*. For though there is a very wide difference, between the love required towards God, and that which is due to our neighbour; though the one depends upon, and is to be regulated by the other; yet surely the *likeness* of the *second command* to the *first* will prove some likeness in the reason and foundation of both. And we may easily apprehend some likeness between the *love*, which we owe to the creatures of God, and that which we owe to their maker and ours, arising from the worth which he himself has placed in them, and from the power which he has given them to contribute in some measure to each others happiness, if rightly used. Moreover there is a gratitude due to them, in a lower degree, for benefits which flow immediately from their good will to us, though the great spring of all is the
 the

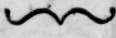
the bounty of God himself, to whom there- SERM.
fore the highest degree of gratitude is due. V.

HOWEVER it is certain, that these strong expressions, of *loving the Lord our God with all our heart and soul*, can mean nothing less, than that we should *love him* with all the powers and faculties which he has given us, and in the most vigorous exertion of those powers; that they should all be under the influence and conduct of *love towards God*, and exercised in doing those things which we believe to be agreeable to him; that the prevailing bent of our souls should be always towards him; that we should employ all our abilities and opportunities in life to the advancement of his glory; that the *love* we bear to him should be the ruling principle of all our actions; that it should be superior to any respect or affection afforded to any of the creatures; and that the love we bear to them should be subordinate to that which we retain for him, and entirely regulated by it.

LET US now enquire into the reason of those descriptions, which our Saviour has given us, of the *love* expected from us towards the divine being: and we shall soon see,

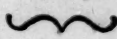
I. THAT we must *love God* in the best use of our *understanding*; because this is the very rule which he has given us, whereby to conduct our affection towards him. 'Tis

SERM. something much higher and nobler than

V.  meer animal operation, which is to be the principle of our *love towards God*. And therefore if we love him in no better way, than that of a sudden flow of animal spirits, raised in a mechanical manner, and presently sinking again; we dishonour the superior faculties of our minds, and the great author of nature, who bestowed on us a dignity vastly above that of the animal creation, in enduing us with them. It is by our reason and judgment, that we receive the knowledge of God, and become properly the subjects of such a principle as religion: and *love to God*, as we shall see, when we come to consider the latter part of our text, is the foundation and the very essence of all true religion. This is a sufficient reason, why we should *love God* in the best use of our *understanding*, or *with all our mind*. And if our *love to God* is thus conducted, it will be steady, regular and uniform.

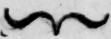
I HAVE mentioned this description first, because it is to be the rule and guide of the rest.

2. IT is plain, that whatever affection we bear to the blessed God must be sincere; because otherwise it is indeed none at all. Sincerity, as I observed, is one of the things contained in those two expressions, of *loving God with all the heart, and with all the soul*.

soul. I am not speaking of the outward SERM.
actions, whereby love is testified, or pre- V.
tended to be shewn; but of that inward 
principle, which is to influence the actions.
Now this, if it is not sincere, is not *love* at
all. God is really and truly, in himself, and
with regard to us, whatever renders him the
proper object of our love. It is therefore
fitting that we should, in reality and in
truth, yield unto him that affection, for
which there is in him so just a foundation.
Therefore all significations of affection or
respect to the supreme being, if they go no
farther than the outward appearance, are
meer mockery: and men would do well to
consider, what being it is, whom they en-
deavour to deceive, when they put him off
with shew instead of reality. But instead
of enlarging upon a point which is so plain
and clear; I observe

3. THAT it becomes us to give unto
God the *height* and *fervour* of our affec-
tions, in preference to all other objects; be-
cause our own *understanding* and judgment
assure us he best deserves it, on account of
the excellent perfections of his nature, and
those exertions of them which come to our
knowledge, and particularly on account of
the relation we bear to him, and the many
instances of his goodness therein manifested
to us. This is the other of those two par-
ticulars, contained in that expression of *lov-*

SERM. *ing God with all the heart, and with all the*

V. *soul.* And this is so far from interfering with
 *loving him with all the mind*; that it is indeed
 the business and duty of our understanding,
 to excite a fervour in our affections towards
 God as their proper object; and if that is
 rightly employed, it will produce this ef-
 fect.

(1.) IF we will exercise our *understanding*
 and judgment, we cannot fail of seeing, that
 the blessed God deserves our highest affec-
 tion, in preference to all other objects, on
 account of the excellent perfections of his
 nature, and those exertions of them in ge-
 neral, which come within the reach of our
 observation.

OUR text tells us, we are to love the
 Lord our God *with the whole mind*, or *un-
 derstanding*. Consequently our *love* must be
 built upon esteem; upon a thorough con-
 viction of the judgment, that God is *lovely*.
 In order therefore to the exercise of this af-
 fection, the *mind* must be employed in me-
 ditating upon those excellent perfections of
 the divine being, which render him the ob-
 ject of our *love*. Now here I will acknow-
 ledge, that the moral perfections are most
 properly the object of our *love*; that we are
 not so properly said *to love God* on account of
 his irresistible power, or his infinite know-
 ledge, as his truth and righteousness and
 goodness. Yet the consideration of the na-
 tural

tural perfections becomes a fit ingredient in SERM.
 that kind of affection, which we owe to V.
 such a being as God is; which in all decency ought to be a reverent affection. For though the beauty which attracts our *love* is properly something of the moral kind; yet the natural perfections inherent in the same being add a dignity to it. And hereupon I would appeal to any man; whether the goodness of God, in particular, is not recommended the more strongly to our esteem and affection, considered as directed in all its exertions by infinite wisdom, and supported by almighty power; and whether it does not become rational beings *to love God* the more *ardently* from this very consideration, that he willingly employs his infinite wisdom and his almighty power for the good of his creatures and subjects. These perfections of his nature, whereby he is infinitely exalted above us, give the highest demonstration of the disinterestedness of his love to us: and consequently the consideration of them must be a proper ingredient in the returns of our love to him.

SINCE therefore we are to love God *with the mind*, or *understanding*; let us enquire what good reason there is, why this tribute should be paid to him; what evidence, to convince our *understanding* that God is *amiable*. Let us ask ourselves, how we, and all those things which we have in view,

SERM. came forth into being ; how they came to

V. be presented to our view, in that order in
 which we behold them, and how we became capable of beholding them, and of discovering so much beauty and harmony in them : and we are necessarily led, beyond second causes, to one supreme original, who sent forth them and ourselves into existence, and who disposed them into that beautiful order in which we find them : and the more we think of this being, as discovered to our minds by the works of his hands and the wonders of his providence, the more clearly we shall see, that he is *amiable* above all other objects.

By the wisdom and power of the creator, the foundation was laid for all those beautiful agreements of one part of the creation with another, which raise such delightful sentiments within us. All the pleasure of any kind, that we are capable of taking, is owing to this creating wisdom and creating power. And when we consider, that there was in the creation of all things a foundation laid for delightful sensations, in all those numerous beings, which were made in any measure capable of sensation ; and that even all those beings which are without sense are so ordered, as to be able to give delight, in one way or other, to innumerable beings of superior rank : how plainly do we see, that the creator himself does, on account of his
 great

great goodness, joined with his infinite wisdom and power, deserve the highest respect from our understandings? SERM.
V.

BUT consider the same being as governor of the world; and there arises a prospect still more engaging. Divine wisdom and power shine forth with more strength of beauty, at least more visible to our understandings, in many of the disposals of providence, than merely in the creation itself. And though the foundation of all our agreeable sensations was laid in the creation; yet the divine goodness appears more visibly in the way by which desirable blessings are immediately directed.

Look abroad into the world in general; take into your view as much as you are able of the whole system of beings: and you will discover, by the mutual dependence of one part upon another, and of all parts upon the one supreme original, that his universal providence over all, and influence upon all, is as it were in every moment of time a continued creation; that he is continually shedding forth the influences of the same power and wisdom, which first sent forth the world into being. And as all these exertions of wisdom and power arise from and are directed by supreme goodness, and are designed for the good of the creatures in general; the thought hereof plainly shews, that this beneficent agent is the proper object of our highest and most

SERM. most enlarged affection; that he is to be

V. *loved* because it is evident he is thus good in himself; that he claims this from us and from all intelligent beings, considered as supremely and universally good, even without any regard to those instances of kindness, for which they or we in particular have cause to be thankful. Indeed we are most apt to consider the means, whereby any desirable blessing comes to be our own portion. And it is certain, that the more we trace them, the more we discover of the goodness of that supreme mind, which has the direction of all, and the wisdom which conducted the train of events whereby we are befriended.

BUT the goodness of God is only one part, though a very considerable part, of that perfect holiness, which makes up his moral character, and renders him the proper object of our best affections. There is in the divine being an universal rectitude, disposing him always to what is right and fitting, and effectually preventing any inclination to the contrary. He is invariably true, and righteous, and faithful. He does not so exercise his goodness towards some, as to be injurious to others: nor indeed does he so much as will or desire to be injurious; having, by reason of his infinite knowledge and irresistible power, no temptation thereunto. Now as the blessed God

is

is thus perfectly and universally holy, he is S E R M.
on that account supremely *amiable*. We V.
cannot forbear acknowledging the beauty of holiness, whenever we see any thing of that kind, though in an imperfect degree, in creatures like ourselves. That consciousness of good and evil, which God himself has placed within us, gives us a delight in reflecting upon whatever we ourselves have done, which we know becomes us. And if our consciences give us joy, upon doing what we believe to be right; and if we cannot forbear approving with pleasure what we see of the like kind, in other imperfect beings like ourselves : how supremely *amiable* must be that character of the divine being, whose rectitude of nature and government is absolutely and invariably perfect ? how can we look towards the perfection of holiness, without a strong and ardent affection ?

ASCENDING thus, in the thoughts of our minds, from what we see and feel, to those perfections of the divine being to which the things themselves are owing ; we cannot fail of discovering, that he is on account of these perfections the proper object of our highest *love*. And our views will always be the most satisfactory, and discover the divine being in the most amiable light, when after considering his perfections distinctly, we consider them

SERM. them as combined together. They then
 V. shine forth in such a brightness of glory, as
 ~~~~~ cannot fail of engaging both our admiration  
 and our love, unless there be something very  
 faulty within ourselves.

BUT lest what I have been discoursing  
 should be thought to be of too abstracted a  
 nature ; I proceed

(2.) To consider the blessed God as the  
 object of our best affections on account of  
 his great goodness towards ourselves in par-  
 ticular.

THOUGH I now consider the goodness  
 of God in this confined view, with respect  
 to ourselves as the objects of it ; yet I  
 would at the same time consider it as joined  
 with that infinite wisdom whereby it is di-  
 rected, that almighty power whereby it is  
 supported, and that universal holiness, by  
 the rules whereof it is always conducted ;  
 for, as has been already observed, by the  
 combination of these glorious attributes to-  
 gether there is a dignity added to that good-  
 ness, which draws forth our affections ; and  
 consequently, there is a dignity communi-  
 cated to that *love* itself, which we conceive  
 in our minds towards the supreme being, to  
 whom we pay respect.

LET us therefore enquire, to whom we  
 are indebted for all the good things we  
 enjoy, whether temporal or spiritual, and  
 for

for the foundation of all our hopes in time to come. Who provided us friends? Who

SERM.

V.

sent forth them and ourselves into being?

Who gave them kind dispositions? Who

gave them abilities to be useful to us, and

directed their way towards us for that pur-

pose? Who is it that gave; who is it that

preserves and continues to us, the health

and strength of our bodies? Who restores

it to us, when impaired? Who endued us

with those faculties of mind, whereby we

are distinguished from the inferior parts of

the creation, and rendered capable of taking

in pleasure from such innumerable beautiful

objects, as the heavens and earth and wa-

ters present to our thoughts? Who gave us

that foundation of the highest and noblest

delight, the knowledge of God himself, the

fountain of all that is great and good?

Who but himself could do it? And who

besides him can it be, who watches over

us for good; defending us from many evils,

to the danger of which we are exposed;

bestowing upon us many blessings, which

we are far from deserving; and above all,

making provision for our eternal felicity, in

such a way, as that we shall be sure to at-

tain it, if it be not our own fault?

THERE is no need of entering into more

particulars. Let every man suggest them

to his own mind. And then let us think

with

SERM. with ourselves, that the great creator and  
 V. governour of the whole world condescends  
 to take this care of us: and especially let  
 us remember, that the offended majesty of  
 heaven does himself make to us overtures of  
 peace, and invite us to follow such measures  
 as are necessary, in order to our enjoying  
 that compleat happiness, which he graciously  
 offers to us. Then let us ask ourselves, whe-  
 ther this *Lord our God* does not deserve to be  
*loved* by us, *with all our heart and soul and*  
*mind.*

THERE is certainly a great force con-  
 tained, and designed to be set forth, in those  
 words of the text, *the Lord thy God*; in the  
 consideration of the divine being as *our God*,  
 our constant benefactor and best friend, as  
 well as our rightful governour. And if we  
 fix this thought in our minds by frequent re-  
 flexion, we shall take the right way to secure  
 the habit of sincere and fervent *love* towards  
 him.

THUS we have seen how great reason  
 there is, why we should *love God*, in the  
 best use and improvement of all our facul-  
 ties and powers; which is undoubtedly the  
 meaning of that variety of expression which  
 our Lord uses in the text.

LET us therefore remember, that we are  
 to *love God with all our understanding*; not  
 only as that is to direct us to the grounds  
 and

and reasons why we should yield to him our S E R M.  
cordial affection ; but likewise as we should V.

thereby be directed to find out proper means of expressing our *love*, by doing those things which we have reason to believe will be agreeable to him ; that our *understanding* and judgment should direct our speech and course of action, in such a way, as tends to honour him, and to promote the interest of his kingdom in the world ; that our substance, and our reputation among men, and all the talents wherewith God has blessed us, of any kind, should in the best use of our judgment be employed in that way, wherein we may most glorifie his holy name, and prevail upon others to *love him* with the same hearty affection, which we ourselves profess to entertain ; that we should carefully lay hold of all the opportunities which his providence affords for the same purpose ; and that we should not content ourselves with sudden fits and starts of affection, but persevere in a steady, regular and uniform love to a being who always deserves it from us.

AND with regard to the other phrases in the text, of *loving God with all the heart and with all the soul* ; let us remember, that it is expected from us, not only that we *love him* after a manner superiour to that wherewith we love any of his creatures, keeping all other love in a subordination to that which



SERM. which we render unto him ; but that our

V. affection towards him should arise to the  
highest degree ; that we should aspire to love  
him more and more ; and should make the  
*love* we render unto God the ruling principle  
of all our actions.



SER-



## S E R M O N VI.

The dignity and importance of the  
command, to love God.

---

M A T. xxii. 37, 38.

*Jesus said unto him : thou shalt love  
the Lord thy God with all thy  
heart, and with all thy soul, and  
with all thy mind : this is the first  
and great commandment.*

**H**AVING in a former discourse con-  
sidered those descriptions of *the love of  
God*, which our Lord mentions in this text :  
I proceed now

II. To shew, that this *love of God* is in-  
deed *the first and chief commandment of his  
law.*

HERE I shall first prove, that this was  
the *principal commandment* of that *law* which  
was given to the *Jews* : and then further,  
that it is the foundation and the substance  
of true religion in all dispensations whatever,  
K and

SERM. and particularly under the dispensation of  
VI. the gospel.

I CHOOSE to shew in the first place, that *the sincere and fervent love of God*, guided by the best improvement of the *understanding* and judgment, was the *principal commandment of the law* given to the *Jews*; because the question, to which our text is an answer, had, in the mind of him who put it, a manifest reference to that law; and we may depend upon it, our Saviour would not go about to deceive him.

WHAT our Lord in the text calls *the first and great commandment of the law*, is mentioned almost word for word by *Moses* in the book of *Deuteronomy*, which contains a recapitulation of the laws recorded in the preceding books: and is afterwards repeated in such a manner as to shew, that God himself looked upon it as the sum and substance of what he required from the people of *Israel*, in all the laws he had given them. And it is evident, that our Saviour in the text speaks in the same large and extensive manner, concerning the whole law delivered to that people, and with the same view. The question was put to him with regard to the whole law: as appears by the words of the enquirer, in the parallel place, *Mar. xii. 32, 33.* approving our Lord's answer. And that our Lord himself would be understood in his answer as speaking of the whole

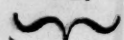
whole law, appears from his own observa- SERM.  
tion, a verse or two after our text, that on VI.  
*those two commandments, of love to God, and*  
*love to our neighbour, all the law and the pro-*  
*phets depend.*

Now whereas the *law*, in its large extent, includes not only the ten precepts which were delivered to *Moses* upon two tables of stone, but likewise all the other precepts, moral, ritual, and judicial, contained in the five books of *Moses*; our Lord seems to single out those ten commands, as containing the substance of all the duties required by the whole law; and reduces the duties enjoined in these tables to *the love of God*, and *the love of our neighbour*. And it is evident, that to these two heads, not only the ten commands themselves, but the whole compass of the *Mosaic* law, is reducible. Of those ten commands I shall speak more particularly bye and bye; and shew, that they all center in *the love of God*. And if the principle of *love to God* would engage the people of the *Jews* to obey the precepts of the first table in particular, all of which relate immediately to himself; it is certain, that the same principle would engage them to obey whatever ritual precepts should clearly appear to be by his authority enjoined, as testimonies of the respect he required from them. Nor could these precepts themselves be obeyed, agreeably to the



SERM.

VI.



intention of the lawgiver, without an inward reverent affection to him; as appears plainly from many declarations in his name by the prophets. As to the precepts of a judicial kind: the end and design of them could not be answered, without a mutual love among the members of the community, arising from the relation in which they knew they were placed by that God, to whom their chief respect and affection were due: and consequently they depended likewise upon *love to God*. And though there was a coercive power given to the magistrate, to punish such as should disobey these laws; yet there were likewise, even in the mention of the laws themselves, frequent remembrances of their obligation to perform the duties required, out of the <sup>p</sup> *love* which they owed to each other as *brethren*, separated by the goodness of God their common father from the rest of the world, to be the objects of his special love and care. And how severe soever might be the punishment to the disobedient; yet no other principle, than that of love to the community, with the Lord Jehovah their benefactor at the head of it, could effectually engage their obedience.

THE

<sup>p</sup> Deut. xv. 12—15. xvi. 10, 11. xxiv. 17, 18. 19—22. And very strong, with regard to the enjoining of mutual affection among the members of this community, are likewise those commands, Deut. xxii. 1—4. xv. 7—11.

THE two tables of the law, I observed, S E R M.  
our Lord reduced to two commands; mak- VI.  
ing *the first and greatest* to be *the love of God.* ~~~~~  
The reason of which is very evident; be-  
cause *the love of God* was the proper prin-  
ciple to lead to the obedience of all the pre-  
cepts in his law: and as to the precepts  
contained in the first table, they have visi-  
bly an immediate reference to him, and can-  
not be performed acceptably without an in-  
ward affection to him.

WHEN the most high, at the delivering  
of the ten commands, *Exod. xx. 2.* declared  
himself to this people to be *the Lord their  
God*, with this engaging addition, *who  
brought them out of the land of Egypt, the  
house of bondage*; and at the same time en-  
joined them, *not to have any other gods before  
him, not to bow down and serve any image, not  
to take his holy name in vain, and to take care  
to keep his sabbath holy*; and when in the  
delivery of these very precepts he assured  
them, ver. 6. of his *shewing mercy unto thou-  
sands of them* THAT LOVE HIM AND  
KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: it is evi-  
dent, that he proposed to engage the peo-  
ple's affection, religious affection, to him,  
as the foundation of their obedience: and it  
is as evident, that nothing short of such an  
affection could engage their obedience, not-  
withstanding that the breach of the precepts  
themselves was afterwards made punishable

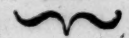
SERM. with death, as a capital offence against him,  
VI. in the character of king. If the blessed God

had, in the delivery of these commands, resolved to be considered only as civil governor, armed with a power to punish transgressors; he would not surely have prefaced his laws in the manner we see he did, or have intermixed such engaging considerations of himself as their benefactor; and especially he would not have told them what was to be hoped for by *those that loved him and kept his commandments*.

I CANNOT therefore forbear observing; that they who will needs exclude all thoughts of religion, properly speaking, out of the *Mosaic* dispensation, merely because it is evident, that the supreme governor of the world did take upon him in a special manner the character of king and governor over the people of *Israel*, do not only very much disserve the cause of christianity, which some imagine they hereby highly honour, but moreover affirm what is not true in fact. The things which I have just now mentioned belong to religion towards God, strictly and properly speaking, though they are interwoven with considerations of him as the civil governor of the *Jewish* nation. And they agree exactly, in the religious sense, to that reverence of the divine majesty, which the *thunderings* and *lightnings* and *earthquake*, immediately preceding the

the delivery of the law, and the miraculous operations of divine power, in their deliverance from *Egyptian* bondage, were intended to excite in this people, towards their great legislator: who not only, by the mouth of *Moses*, told them that *he had spoken with them from heaven*; but often spoke to them concerning himself as the *possessor of heaven and earth*, thereby distinguishing himself from all the gods of the heathen, and laying claim to their religious reverence, as clearly, as by his unparalleled kindness to them he claimed their affection. Upon the whole, it is altogether incredible; that the great governour of the world should give a special revelation of his mind from heaven to a peculiar people, consisting in a variety of commands, many of them most plainly of the religious kind, and in numerous messages of the same tendency by his prophets; and yet leave out religion from the whole, and confine the views of the revelation to the affair of civil government. This is neither consistent with his own character, nor with the laws themselves, nor with those messages of the prophets which are expressly of the religious kind, nor with those many others, which consider this constitution as designed to be the means of ushering in another of a more excellent nature, which should extend its benefits to all nations.---But to return to the view of those duties, which were required

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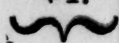
Exod. xx.  
22.

Deut. x.  
14, 15.  
Exod. xix.  
5.

*For the high Com-  
mandment, of their  
excellency, in prom-  
-tance, contained in  
many passages of  
Scripture, particu-  
larly in the 19, and  
119, 120 psalms.*



SERM. of the *Israelites*, in the commands of the  
VI. first table.



THE character of God, *their God*, necessarily excluded the acknowledgment and the worship of *any other beside him*: but if they harboured inclinations towards any other deity, it must be in exclusion of him; it must be a proof of the want of that reverent affection which was due to him. And yet if they had not a strong affection for him, they could never for his sake exclude the acknowledgment of all other deities, while they were under the powerful temptation of the example of all their neighbours around them, to worship a great variety. The subsequent threatening of death could not, and we see it did not, restrain them, when once they cast out of their hearts the *love* of the *one living and true God*: but both the people, and their rulers along with them, resolved to do as their neighbours did. The same thing is evident with regard to the *worship of images*, and the *taking God's name in vain*; neither of which things could have been done without a manifest contempt of him, whom they ought to reverence and love. And yet when *image-worship* prevailed all around them, they themselves being but a mean and helpless people, and *some* of their neighbours mighty and powerful; either the awe they might stand in of their neighbours, or the fear of being reproached for

for their singularity, would render it exceed- S E R M.  
 ing difficult to forbear conforming, if they had VI.  
 not an inward-esteem for that *one living and*  
*true God*, whose commands they had received. They would easily be brought into the  
*abuse of his name*, and despising the orders of  
 a being who laid such restraints upon them,  
 if they could not retain the *love of him* in  
 their *hearts*, from the consideration of the  
 fitness of obeying one, who so well deserved  
 their affection. And as to the *keeping of his*  
*sabbath* : this precept having so immediate a  
 regard to the worship of God, and requiring  
 such a special respect to him, exclusive even  
 of their temporal concerns upon that day,  
 shews that God claimed their affection in  
 an extraordinary degree, by assigning a con-  
 siderable part of their time, at stated periods,  
 for his immediate service. All this they  
 would perform, agreeably to his mind, if  
 they had a real inward *affection* to him in  
 their hearts ; but not otherwise. And thus  
 it appears, that our Lord spoke what was  
 strictly true, when he affirmed in our text,  
 that the *love of God* was the *first and great*  
*commandment of the law*.

BUT farther : the sincere and fervent love  
 of God deserves the character of the *first*  
*and great commandment*, with regard to that,  
 which Christ calls the *second* ; which is, *to*  
*love our neighbour as ourselves*. It is evident,  
 that this command, which takes in all the six  
 pre-

SERMON. precepts of the second table, does in its own

VI. nature so depend upon the sincere *love of God*; that if you will at all consider it as a precept of religion towards him, , there could be no security for the people's obedience without it. If indeed you will consider it only as a command from the civil magistrate, as God was the king of the *Jewish* people; the breach of it, where it discovered itself in hurtful actions, might be punished; and thereby some part of the mischief, forbidden by the precepts of the second table, might be restrained. Yet no command of the civil magistrate could restrain the inward *coveting* what belonged to another, which is one of the precepts of the second table. And if such commands could in some measure prevent open injuries, of the most flagrant kind; yet they could not hinder any one of a thousand hurtful tendencies and advances towards those open injuries: and 'tis certain they could not engage that inward *love to their neighbour as themselves*, which our Lord declares to have been the original design and the very substance of all those laws. And it is plain, that the apostle *Paul* thus understood the words of his lord and master; when, writing to those *who knew the law*, he made the *love of one another* to be the *fulfilling of the law*: and cited most of the precepts of the second table of the decalogue, in proof of his assertion. *Rom. xiii. 8, 9. Owe no man any thing,*

Rom. vii.  
1.

*thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law, (that is, he hath fulfilled that part of the law which relates to his neighbour) For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly contained in this saying, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* SERM. VI.

THESE things, I think, are sufficient to shew; that sincere and fervent *love to God* was, in the mind of the lawgiver himself, *the principal commandment* of the law given to the *Jews*; and after a particular manner the substance of the first table of the precepts in the decalogue, all which relate immediately to God himself.

I AM far from designing to affirm, by any thing said on this occasion; either that the decalogue includes in it all moral precepts, or was ever designed for a perfect system of them; or that the whole of the decalogue is of a moral nature; or that christians are obliged to any thing contained in the decalogue, merely on account of its being a divine law to the *Jews*. For there are several moral duties, particularly of the relative kind, among men towards each other, which are neither mentioned in the decalogue, nor, without very far-fetched reasonings reducible to it: there are several things in it peculiar to the *Jews*: and the introduction to the



SERM. the whole shews that it was given only to  
 VI. them ; the consequence of which is, that  
 ~~~~~ whatever therein contained is binding upon  
 people of other nations, must become so by
 the natural obligation of the things them-
 selves, and not by their being included in
 this set of laws, given to the *Jews* by Jeho-
 vah their king.

BUT surely, the Almighty did not, by
 taking on him the character of their king,
 lose his relation to them as God, or the power
 of requiring their inward reverent affection.
 And if he did not ; and if moreover he took
 special care to make himself known to them
 as the *one living* and true God : then he
 might justly expect their obedience to his
 commands as the commands of God : and
 the true principle of this obedience is, ac-
 cording to our Lord's account, that *love*
 which he describes in our text ; nor with-
 out it could that obedience be paid to them,
 which it is plain the lawgiver required.

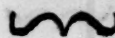
I chose to be the longer in discoursing on
that very law, which God gave to the *Israel-*
ites by the hand of *Moses* ; partly because, as
 I have already observed, it was concerning
 that law that the question was put, which
 produced the answer in our text ; and partly
 because we shall find our Saviour himself
 declaring, concerning the substance of that
 law, *that he came not to destroy but to fulfil it*.
 If this prove to be the case, then it will fol-
 low ;

low; that the sincere and fervent *love of God* is the *first and chief precept* of that religion, which Christ came to teach, and of the obedience to which, he came to set us the brightest example: and this was one part of what I undertook to prove, under this second head of discourse. SERM. VI.

BUT even this will be the better received by considering, that the sincere and fervent *love of God* is, properly speaking, the foundation and substance of true religion in its own nature; and consequently must be so in all dispensations or manifestations of his mind to us.

THE difference between religion and virtue is this: that *virtue* is the practice of those things, which appear to be our duty even without immediate regard to a divine being, and is confined to mutual offices among men for the good of society: whereas the very essence of *religion* is the regard it has to God; both in those things which relate more immediately to himself, and in discharging even those duties which we owe to men, out of respect to him, as the author of those relations, from which our duties arise. Since therefore all true religion consists in a regard to God; it must needs be the *first and principal part* of religion, to entertain the sincere and fervent *love of him in the heart*. From such an affection as this a chearful obedience will flow: and the

SERM. the more sincerely this affection is entertain-

VI. ed in the heart, the more extensive and un-
 reserved will our obedience be to every fig-
 nification of his mind, and disposal of his
 wisdom. If from the serious exercise of
 our *understanding* and judgment we are con-
 vinced, that the blessed God is the most ho-
 ly, the wisest, and the best of beings, that
 he rules the world in righteousness, and that
 he is by his goodness prompted to employ
 his infinite wisdom, and that almighty power
 with which it is attended, in providing for
 the welfare of his creatures, suitably to their
 respective capacities ; if we make this re-
 flexion habitual to our minds, and remem-
 ber likewise that he has been good and kind
 to us : we shall then, with a reverent af-
 fection cordially *love* him, cheerfully put
 our trust in him, patiently submit to his
 disposal in afflictive circumstances, render to
 him our hearty thanks for the benefits we
 receive, and pray to him in faith for what
 is further needful ; and we shall moreover
 shew respect to his creatures, from the con-
 sideration, that he is the common father of
 us and them. And thus will every part of
 our duty be secured upon the strongest foun-
 dation.

THE duties which are owing more im-
 mediately to God himself can be secured by
 no other considerations, than such as relate
 immediately to him : and of all those confi-
 derations,

derations, sincere affection is the strongest tie. And as to the duties owing to our neighbours ; a regard to God, as the author of those relations which we bear to them, and from whence our mutual obligations arise ; the consideration of him as the judge of our behaviour in this respect ; and the thought of our obligation, to shew in the person of his creatures a respectful affection to him, to whom we ourselves are so much indebted : these, I say, will be a much stronger security for our good conduct towards our neighbours, than any meer considerations of virtue, or of the welfare of society, can possibly be ; besides that the sincere desire of the welfare of society is not so likely to be entertained from any other principle as this, of the *love of God*. Cast away the thought of a *divine being*, and of the *respect* due to him, in every thing that relates to his creatures : and then righteousness and benevolence towards men will, at least in some cases, stand upon a very uncertain foundation. There are indeed other considerations, which may guide and excite men to some part of their duty to each other, and in some circumstances : but none, without the *love of God*, will secure it in all circumstances, and upon all occasions. Justly therefore may we affirm ; that the *love of God is the first and great commandment of his law* in general, considered as including

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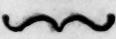
SERMON. including all religion, and all moral obligation.
VI.



BUT let us now briefly observe; that it is the *first and principal requirement* of that holy religion, which Christ came to teach, and wherein he was to go before us by his own bright example.

THAT it is the chief requirement of that religion which Christ taught, is sufficiently proved by comparing the words of our text, and what immediately follows, with what he delivered in his sermon from the mount; when he declared, that *he came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil*: Mat. v. 17. It is in the same strain that he speaks in the words presently after our text, ver. 40. concerning *the love of God, and the love of our neighbour*; that *on those two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*. This law therefore, of which the love of God is the *first and great commandment*, and which was confirmed by the ministry of the *prophets*, in delivering precepts of the same moral nature, as those to which our Saviour in both places refers, is the same law, which he came not to destroy, but to fulfil: and consequently, the love of God is the chief, the principal part of that religion which he came to teach us, and the foundation of all the rest.

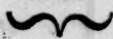
AND if there is any thing to be grounded upon his own course of practice, for the confirmation of this truth; it cannot fail of being

being well confirmed. For in the life of SERM.
the blessed Jesus we have the most perfect VI.
example of unreserved love to the Father, 
that ever was shewn. Whence otherwise
proceeded that patience and resignation to
his will, under the innumerable indignities
which he suffered in the course of his mi-
nistry? Whence that cheerfulness of mind,
in all the fatigues of his daily employment,
in preaching his doctrine, and performing
his mighty works? And whence that reso-
lution, with which at length he laid down
his life? You will say perhaps, that this was
owing to his love to the souls of men. But
will you separate this from an affectionate
regard to the Father, who sent him to do
and to suffer all that he did and suffered?
Then you will contradict his own express
declarations. In one of which, *Job. iv. 34.*
he told his disciples, while he was actually
engaged in ministering to the salvation of
souls, and at the same time wanted the re-
freshment of food; *My meat is to do the will
of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*
And in another, he represented the *laying
down of his life* as an act of willing obedience
to his Father's command. *Job. x. 17, 18.*
*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I
lay down my life, that I may take it again. No
man taketh it from me, (that is, no man can
take it from me, without my own willing
submission) but I lay it down of myself. I*

L

have

SERM. *have power to lay it down, and I have power*

VI. *to take it again. This commandment have I*
 *received of my Father.*

THE improvement I would make of what has been delivered shall be as follows.

I. IF the sincere and fervent *love of God* is his *first and great commandment*, and the sum and substance of all true religion; then how great is the error of those, who pretend, that nothing more is required of them, than to be inoffensive and useful in society, and from that pretence cast off all immediate regards to the divine being? These men leave out the chief thing that should secure an inoffensive and useful life. And therefore, however agreeable they may, from other principles, make themselves to those with whom they converse, and however on some accounts useful to the public; yet the want of this grand principle of religion, and especially the valuing of themselves for paying no regard to it, must of course betray them sometimes into hurtful and pernicious measures; besides the consequences to be expected in a future state, if there should be a God, and he should call them to account for the contempt they have cast upon him. If there is a God; if he is the governour of the world; and if it is owing to his wise and gracious constitution of things, that society becomes the means of our being agreeable and useful to each other:
then

then surely the returns of a reverent affection S E R M.
are due to him, from whom all the pleasures VI.
and benefits of society redound to ourselves : 
and then likewise, to him we ought to have
our regard, in all those means, whereby we
endeavour to make ourselves agreeable and
useful to others. If God is not the author
of society ; then who is ? how do we come
into society, or even into being ? We shall
be in danger of running into downright
atheism, if once we depart from this grand
important principle of all true religion, and
all right conduct, the *love of God*. But the
chief use I would make of the preceding
discourse is,

II. To make us careful, what thoughts
we entertain concerning the subject of it,
and to persuade us to act agreeably to its de-
sign. We have seen, how great is the dig-
nity and importance of the command, to
love God. Let us therefore take care, that
we do not deceive ourselves in our sentiments
concerning it : for errors relating to this *first*
and great commandment, the foundation of all
true religion, may be of pernicious conse-
quence. Let us depend upon it, that the
love of God does not consist, on the one hand,
in starts of passion, or in a childish fondness
without any guidance of reason ; nor on the
other hand, in a mere speculation upon the
divine excellencies and perfections : but it is
something of a practical nature, directed by

SERM. the judgment and conscience, and influenc-

VI. ing the course of action; something that
 engages us to obey the commands, and conform to the example, of him whom we pretend to *love*.

WE have seen, that it is to be directed by the *understanding*: and yet it is a dangerous delusion to imagine, that mere speculation upon the fitness and reasonableness of *loving God* is the very *love* itself. We may reason very rightly about it, and yet be quite destitute of it, for want of following the dictates of our conscience. So likewise our *love to God* ought to be fervent; we are to

Luk. x. love him *with all our strength*, as the precept
 27. in our text is expressed in other places: and
 Mar. xii. yet the mere warmth of the spirits is not the
 30. *love of God*; and they who have none of those extraordinary gusts of devotion, for which others so much value themselves, may have more of the *true love of God* in their hearts, than they who make their boasts of them. Consequently they do great injury to themselves and to the cause of religion, who condemn themselves, and make their lives miserable, for want of feeling always that extraordinary warmth of spirit in religious exercises, which they wish for; or for the sake of ill suggestions presented to their minds, which suggestions they themselves disapprove, and which by
 the

the course of their actions they shew that SERM.
they abhor. VI.

WE have seen, that the *love of God* is inseparable from a delight in those things which are agreeable to his mind, and which become the relation we bear to him. Thus it is, in the case of other objects of our affection. We are desirous to do those things which are pleasing to the person we love, and glad when we have the opportunity. The apostle speaks very clearly to this purpose, *1 Joh. ii. 5. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.* And, chap. v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.*

Now in pursuance of this it is certain: that if we love that God who is supremely good, we love that goodness, for which he is supremely amiable: if we love that God who is in all respects perfectly holy, we love that holiness which in him shines forth with so bright a lustre. And we cannot surely love that righteousness, that faithfulness, that goodness, which are in God in the highest perfection, without giving some proofs thereof in the course of our actions, according as circumstances in life call for them. If we *love God*, we shall as far as we are able, in our commerce with men, copy after his perfect example: in the exercise of righteousness and benevolence towards men, we shall shew our *love of him*,

SERM. by doing those things which we know he
VI. loves.

AND they who in their exercise of righteousness and benevolence are really influenced by this principle of *love to God*, 'tis certain, cannot withhold from him those testimonies of affection and respect, whereof he himself is the immediate object. They cannot withhold from him thanksgiving for benefits, which they are sure came from his liberal hand. They cannot forbear praying to him for those supplies, which they know must proceed originally from him, by what means soever they are conveyed to them. They will not fail to put their trust and confidence in him under difficult trials; or to resign themselves to his disposal. These things their relation to him as their father, their governour and benefactor, possessed of those perfections of which we have been treating, do at least as naturally call for, as for the imitation of him in their converse with men: and therefore these tributes of a reverent affection they will pay to him, as suited to the character of that greatest and best of beings, to whom they have the honour to stand thus related.

FURTHER, if we do really *love God with all our heart and soul and mind*; we shall endeavour to inspire others with the same pious affection, which warms our own breasts.

breasts. It is one of the most becoming instances, wherein we can shew our reverent affection to the divine being, to do all we can to conciliate respect and affection to him in those with whom we converse; to desire that all rational beings, all beings capable of honouring and loving him, should yield him that affection which is his due; and to contribute to it, as much as we are able. And how much good of this kind might be done, by the example of a religious and holy life, by a watchful care to avoid whatever might prove an occasion of offence, by taking favourable opportunities to make good impressions, especially upon young and tender minds, and to remove objections and difficulties out of the way of those who labour under them, by maintaining the worship of God in families, and by encouraging a serious and diligent attendance upon the publick service; I am afraid many professed christians do not sufficiently consider.

LASTLY, if we do indeed *love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind*; then we shall retain that zeal for God and religion, and shew that just value for right sentiments concerning him and his worship, which will induce us to persist in his faithful service, notwithstanding the greatest opposition and discouragement; and shall be ready to part with all that is dear to us in this world, rather than deliberately do what

SERM. we believe would displease him. What

VI. Christ makes a necessary qualification of becoming his faithful disciples, *Luk. xiv. 26.* is a necessary consequence of the sincere and fervent *love of God*; that is to say, a comparative *hatred* of all other things, whenever they come in competition with him. If we do not give him the preference above *father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and above life itself*; we cannot be said to *love God with all our heart and soul and mind.* It will indeed be no proof of *love to God*, but the very contrary, to choose to disoblige our friends, or to become disagreeable to them, when they require nothing inconsistent with a sincere respect to him. But if any human friendship is to be gained or continued upon such conditions, as we do really believe will be displeasing to him who best deserves our affection; then, *friendship* to them must be *enmity* to him.

Now this thought, closely pursued, may affect christians, in more cases perhaps, than many are aware. The approving *their love to God* may possibly expose them oftner to contempt and loss, than they are apt to imagine. And by those who are eagerly desirous of worldly esteem, or worldly profit and power, and who are resolved for that purpose to comply with the customs and fashions of the times, this divine principle can never be

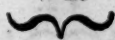
be entertained. They will ever be finding out some palliations, for a compliance with what they acknowledge is not thoroughly right, rather than suffer their acquaintance to think meanly of them for their religious singularity, or lose the advantages, which by conforming to established customs they are sure to gain. SERM. VI.

BUT the apostle's words are express in the case, 1 *Joh. ii. 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* The man, whose affections are very strongly engaged in the love of sensual pleasure, of riches, or of honour and power, cannot love God with all his heart and soul and mind, if it were for no other reason, than that his heart and soul and mind are already engrossed by other objects. But further; the principles themselves are contrary to each other in their own nature. For it is from an excessive affection to the things of this world, that all vices spring; all those numerous evils, which are included in those comprehensive words of the apostle, in the verse immediately following that just now quoted: and these, as he shews, are directly opposite to God's constitution of things: the consequence of which is, that where they are indulged, they must destroy any such thing as a reverent affection towards him. *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh,*
and

SERM. *and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,*
 VI. *is not of the Father, but is of the world. We*

~~~~~ must therefore fit loose from this world, if we will secure in our own hearts that *love to God*, which our text requires. And if we will follow the dictates of our judgment, we may easily see, that thus we ought to do. If we will at all exercise our reason, there can be no difficulty in satisfying ourselves, that the *love of God* is preferable to the *love of this world*. What comparison is there between the rival objects, in point of dignity and real worth? And what satisfaction can worldly pleasures, profits or honours, give to our minds, comparable to that which arises from placing the affection upon the best and most perfect of all beings? What comfort is there arising from the remembrance of having gratified a sensual, a covetous, or an ambitious passion, in comparison of having approved ourselves pious, righteous and beneficent? These are the things, in which we shew our *love to God*: and there is as much difference between the satisfaction arising from hence, and that which comes from worldly gratifications, as there is between that noble part of our constitution, wherein we bear a resemblance to the greatest and best of beings, and that whereby we are allied to the animal part of his creation.

LET us then in earnest entertain the *love*  
 of

*of God* in our hearts: and this will make S E R M.  
the whole course of our duty easie and de- VI.  
lightful. If we sincerely and fervently love   
God: then will our worship of him, both  
in publick and in private, be a pleasure to  
us: then shall we be prepared for a proper  
behaviour in every changing circumstance  
of life: in prosperity we shall be thankful,  
as becomes us, to the author of our benefits:  
in adversity we shall be humbly resigned to  
the infinite wisdom and righteousness and  
goodness of him, in whom we have put our  
trust: in every state we shall be contented  
and prepared for usefulness. If this be the  
reigning disposition of our hearts, we shall  
love our brethren for the sake of our common  
father, and shall, in a proper manner, and  
suitably to our condition in life, let them feel  
the good effects of it.

BUT consider, on the other hand, how  
heavily we shall go on in the discharge of  
our duty, if we be not influenced by that  
*love of God* which our text recommends.  
If we do not *love him with all our heart and  
soul and mind*, but retain a longing desire  
after something that is inconsistent with his  
honour; we shall perform his service with  
great reluctancy; we shall grow weary of  
his worship; and when any trouble or difficulty  
attends or even threatens us, on account  
of what we know he requires of us,  
we



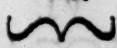
SER M. we shall be ready to forsake his service, as

VI. unprofitable ; we shall see no reasonableness or fitness in the duty of resignation to his disposal ; we shall be in danger of growing more and more discontented under his government, and at length of shaking it off intirely. We can never be secured against these evils, without entertaining the sincere and fervent *love of God*. And we have seen, that we can never entertain this divine principle, while we suffer our affections to be very much engaged with the things of this world.

Now if we would not have this world engross too much of our affections, let it not take up too much of our thoughts. We may employ all that concern about the things of this life, that is either needful or fitting for us, and yet allow a considerable part of our time for contemplation on the best of beings ; and particularly for such meditations, as shall naturally kindle and keep up within our hearts the love of him. And it is of vast importance, that we encourage such thoughts, and dwell much upon them. For such as are our prevailing thoughts concerning God, such will be our disposition and behaviour towards him.

LET us therefore accustom ourselves to such thoughts concerning the divine being, as may justly endear him to us ; such thoughts particularly, as were suggested in  
the

the explication of the duty of *loving him*. SERM.

Let us often meditate upon those excellent VI. 

perfections, which render him the proper object of our esteem and love. Let us often think of him in the characters of creator and governour; and call to mind those effects of his creation and government, with regard to ourselves and to all other beings, which justly challenge our most reverent affection. Let us never entertain a thought so injurious, as the very suspicion, that he can take delight in the unhappiness of any of his creatures, or suffer in himself any conduct, which shall necessarily betray them into it, without any fault of their own. But let us often call to mind what firm reason we have to believe, that he is infinitely good in himself, and that his goodness is wise and righteous goodness; that *he is good unto all*, and that *his tender mercies are over all his works*; that, as a proof hereof, he provides for all his creatures a happiness suited to their condition; which happiness they shall not fail of enjoying, if it be not entirely their own fault; and that he is so far from being careless or unconcerned about the happiness of any part of the rational creation, that he does, with regard to every individual of it, whatever is any way consistent with his wisdom as a governour, towards promoting their welfare.

SUCH thoughts as these concerning the blessed God, cherished in our minds, will keep

SERM. keep up warm sentiments of affection to-  
 VI. wards him. And since they are no other  
 ~~~~~ than his due, and tend to carry us through  
 life with the greatest comfort to ourselves,
 and usefulness to others; we ought in all
 reason to make them familiar to us.

BUT let us not content ourselves with
 mere meditation. Let us take care, that
 our pious thoughts have their genuine effect
 upon our course of action. Let us in earnest
 consider, how we shall best shew our cordial
 respect to him who most deserves it. And let
 it not be accounted a light matter, to shew
 in speech or action any disrespect to him;
 or willingly to omit any part of that visible
 respect, which is due to him, and which may
 naturally be expected to flow from an in-
 ward sincere affection.





S E R M O N VII.

The second commandment like to
the first.

M A T. xxii. 39.

*And the second is like unto it : Thou
shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

TH E S E words have a direct reference to those immediately preceding : wherein our Lord had declared, that *the first and great commandment of God's law* was, to *love him with all the heart and soul and mind*. He was not asked, *what was the second commandment*. And yet because he knew it might be useful, to put his hearers in mind, in a few words, of the sum of those duties which they owed to each other, and to make the reflexion which immediately follows, ver. 40. that *upon these two commandments*, of love to God and love to each other, *all the law and the prophets depend* ; he thought fit to make this declaration unasked, whereas he had been enquired of, *which was the first and great commandment*.

IN

SERM. IN discoursing on this second requirement
 VII. of the divine law, I shall enquire,

~ I. WHAT is the proper meaning of the command, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

II. IN what respect our Lord would have us look upon it as *like* to the first and great command ; and what good reason he had to call it *the second command*, and not the *first*.

I. I AM to enquire, what is the proper meaning of the command, *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

AND here it is necessary to observe, that by *neighbour* our Lord meant any person of the race of mankind, without exception ; all our fellow creatures ; all those in particular, with whom we ourselves shall have any thing to do while we continue in this world. This is very clear, from our Lord's own explication of his meaning in another place : where, as in our text and context, he had summed up the law in *the love of God and of our neighbour*, and shewed how large was his sense of *neighbourhood*, by the parable of the charitable *Samaritan* ; who performed a *neighbour's* part, when the priest and *Levite* neglected their distressed brother, and left him to perish. The passage is in *Luk. x. 26--36*. In which last verse our Saviour purposely puts the question, *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him who fell among*

among the thieves? And being answered, SERM.

He that shewed mercy on him ; Jesus made VII.
this reply ; *Go, and do thou likewise ;* that is, 

‘ Go, and look upon thyself under an obligation to perform the like neighbourly part, according to thy ability, to any one who is ever so much a stranger to thee ; and do not imagine, that a man’s being of another nation, or of a different religion, can excuse thee from performing to him the kind and friendly office of a neighbour.’

BUT though our Lord spoke of *neighbourhood* in this large and extensive sense ; yet the command, *to love our neighbour as ourselves*, is not to be understood in the strictest meaning of the words, so as to require the same care and concern for the welfare of all men in the world, as for our own. Our Lord’s own explication of this precept in another place shews, that no such impossible thing is required of us : but that the meaning is, we should do to all others whatever kind and friendly office we ourselves should desire from them, were we in their circumstances, and they in ours ; and that we should avoid whatever would be injurious or grievous to them, as we would desire they should forbear whatever might be grievous or injurious to us. This is the plain meaning of these words in the sermon from the mount, *Mat. vii. 12. Therefore all things whatsoever*

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ye

SERM. *ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.* The reflexion, which is here connected with the precept, shews, that our Saviour is speaking of that universal love to mankind, which is the grand design of *the law and the prophets*. And this so exactly quadrates with the account given by our Saviour in the verse next after our text, that *on the love of God and the love of our neighbour all the law and the prophets depend*; that there can be no doubt, that the one passage was, in the mind of our Saviour, the true explication of the other.

AND this explication, when we come to consider it, we shall find to be of a very large extent. Though it is no more than common equity requires; yet that love must be of a great extent and influence, which shall restrain men from every thing that may be injurious to their neighbours, in their person, or substance, or reputation; which shall make them curb their passions under provocation, refrain from all violence to the person, or attempts upon the substance of another, whenever the temptations of pleasure or profit or ambition lie in the way; and which can bridle that unruly member the tongue, which is so apt to run out even into needless defamations, either to satisfy revenge, or to fill up conversation. 'Tis yet a more extensive love, that can prevail with a man,

a man, to afford to every fellow creature SERM.
in distress whatever relief he would desire VII.

from him in the like case, to endeavour to comfort the afflicted mind, and to give according to his ability the needful supplies for the body. But it is yet a more extensive principle of benevolence, that can engage us to a universal readiness to do good to all that come in our way ; to make ourselves agreeable to them, as far as we can within the bounds of innocency ; and to promote their real advantage in every respect, according to our power. Yet all this is what most certainly we ourselves would desire from others ; and what we should think we might reasonably expect. For every one of us is ready enough to say ; ‘ Why should any man
‘ do me an injury ; why offer any violence
‘ to my person, or substance or reputation ;
‘ why needlessly occasion any grief to my
‘ mind ? Nay, why should not my fellow
‘ creature, if I have offended him, and
‘ discover a real sorrow for it, and a hearty
‘ resolution not to do the like again, why
‘ should he not readily forgive me ? If I
‘ am in distress, and my neighbours are
‘ able to relieve my necessities and comfort
‘ me in my sufferings ; have I not a right
‘ to expect it from them, as being a fel-
‘ low creature, and a child of the same
‘ common father ? And is not the same
‘ consideration a good reason why in every

SERM. 'respect those who are about me should
 VII. 'cheerfully contribute to the prosperity
 ~~~~~ 'and comfort of my life?'

THESE are the thoughts, which we are apt enough to entertain in our own minds concerning ourselves. And there is no doubt, that we have a right to entertain such thoughts. But then it is certain; that whatever is the ground, upon which we entertain such thoughts concerning ourselves, is as good a reason why our neighbours, in all the like circumstances, should expect the same kind affection, and the same good effects of it from us.

LET us enquire a little into the reason, why we expect kindness from others: and that will strengthen the sense of our duty towards them, as contained in the precept of *loving our neighbour as ourselves*.

SOME perhaps will choose to have recourse to the nature of society; which necessarily requires mutual affection for its support. And there is no doubt, that this is a good reason, why we may claim a needful support from the society of which we are a part. Moreover, it is fitting, that if one member in society expects kind offices from the rest, he should be ready to perform kind offices to them. But the question is, upon what ground or foundation we expect kindness from society, when we may happen to want it before we have been able to shew the  
 the

the benevolence of our own minds towards S E R M.  
others. Will the mere consideration of the VII.  
nature of society be likely to produce this  
kindness, or lay a sufficient foundation for  
that obligation to mutual benevolence, in  
all the particulars contained in the precept,  
*to love our neighbour as ourselves?* 'Tis to  
be feared it will not.

BUT there is another consideration, which  
includes all the arguments taken from the  
nature of society, and which effectually  
proves an obligation to do all that kindness  
to our neighbours, which we in their con-  
dition could wish for from them. And  
that is, the considering all men as children  
of the same common father, all belonging  
to the same family, and under the same  
government, and consequently accountable  
for any unkindness shewn to one another,  
in with-holding what the hand of the pa-  
rent himself does not immediately reach  
forth to every one, but leaves in the hand  
of some in the family, to see how they  
will behave towards the rest. Here the re-  
lation of brethren, and the respect due to the  
one common parent, include every argu-  
ment that can be drawn from the nature  
of society, with the wisest and the best of  
governours at the head of it: here is the ad-  
ditional bond of religion, in the immediate  
view towards God; which even of itself, if  
seriously considered, is of vastly more force,

SERM. than any thing that can be gathered from  
 VII. the mere reflexion upon society, exclusive  
 of the thought that it arises from the relation, in which the Most High has placed us towards each other. It is from his constitution of things, that the duties of society arise. And by the same meditations, whereby we find it our duty to love and honour him, who is our creator and supreme governor and constant benefactor, we find out likewise our obligation to perform every one of the duties included in that extensive precept, of *loving our neighbour as ourselves*; because we cannot but see, that he stands in the same relation to all the rest of mankind.

'TIS true, we are all mutually dependent, whether the supreme being himself placed us in that condition, or whether we all, by meer chance, and without the design of any superintending agent, sprang forth into such a kind of existence. But that all this should come to pass by chance, is impossible; whereas it is easy and natural to derive all that belongs to us from the wise constitution of that divine being, to whom we all owe our original. And nothing can be more natural, than that the children of the same father should shew a high degree of affection to each other, and thereby prove the sincere respect they have for the parent himself.

HOWEVER, let every argument that  
 tends

tends to strengthen mutual love have its force : let the condition in which we find ourselves, and the nature of society, have their proper influence : only let religion, as it was our Lord's design it should ; let religion, I say, have its due honour : and that will always be found to have the strongest influence in the duties of mutual affection. Let it be said, that according to the nature of men and things, he who will shew no tenderness to others, can when he comes to want help, have very little reason to expect it from others, unless they will act from better principles than he did : let it be said, that the man, who is this day in the highest prosperity, may before to-morrow be in the lowest degree of adversity ; and that since his condition is so uncertain, he ought to exercise that benevolence, which he knows not how soon he may want : let it be added, that besides yielding relief to the necessitous, and avoiding whatever is injurious, the real prosperity of society depends upon extensive kindness and benevolence, even towards those who are not in distress : and let others ascribe these things to what other cause they will : yet the principle of religion, which ascribes all these things to God's constitution, and looks towards him as the common parent, justly requiring a mutual affection among all those whom he hath chosen to place in a mutual dependence,



SERM. will lay a better foundation for this mutual

VII. affection, than all other arguments which the  
 wit of man can invent. And I will appeal to any man, who has ever had any sense of religion upon his mind, whether that one thought, of duty towards God, has not a stronger force upon him, to teach him his duty towards his neighbour, and excite him to the practice of it, than all the other arguments where the thought of a divine being is excluded.

FROM this argument, of our relation to God, as the common father of all, we derive the claim we have to relief from some or other of his creatures, though we cannot go to any particular person and say he is obliged to do every thing for us that we want. From the same argument we know we are entituled to a civil, courteous behaviour and conversation, and to the peaceable enjoyment of our own possessions. And we need only change the person, and consider the case of any other, to let us see, that that other, and indeed every other individual of mankind, has the same claim of right from us, as we have from them.

THUS I have enquired what is the meaning of the command in our text, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. And I think it plainly appears, that we are hereby required to avoid doing or saying whatever would be injurious or needlessly grievous to others; and

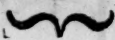
and moreover that with regard to every individual of mankind, we should be ready to administer that needful comfort in distress, and to give proofs of that benevolence, which we would desire from them, were they in our condition and we in theirs. And if we will but allow ourselves seriously to consider, how much we should be in earnest, in condemning all injurious or unkind treatment of ourselves, or the with-holding that comfort or that respect from us, to which we think we have a right by virtue of God's constitution of things; we shall thence draw a never-failing argument to excite us to righteousness, benevolence and kindness, towards all those with whom we have to do. I proceed now to enquire,

II. IN what respect our Lord would have us look upon this as *like to the first and great command*; and what good reason he had to call it *the second command*, and not the *first*.

THE *second command*, whereby we are required to *love our neighbours*, is *like to the first*, not in respect of giving to them *our whole heart and soul and mind*; for this kind of love is by *the first command* appropriated to God as peculiarly his due: but it is *like to the first* in its regards to God, as a matter of religion towards him, a respect due to him, to whom our *first* and most ardent love is due. And it is certain, that while we consider  
our

SERM.  
VII.

S E R M. our fellow creatures as children of the same

VII.  kind parent, to whom we owe our own being and all the blessings we enjoy, and while we shew respect to them out of a sense of that dutiful affection which we owe to him, who has placed us in such a relation ; the obedience we pay to the *second* command, in *loving our neighbours*, is very like to that which we pay to the *first*, in the duties more immediately respecting God himself. The whole is resolved into the *love of God*, as it is a duty of religion towards him : and it is in that view, that our Lord considers it in this text. He considers our *love to mankind*, in all the particular branches of that love, and the kind offices whereby it is discovered, as included in the *love of God* : and shews, by the manner of his connecting the two commands together, that if we do indeed *love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind*, we shall for that very reason, and from that very principle, *love our neighbour as ourselves*.

AND in this view of things it is easie to see, how good reason our Lord had to call this precept, to love our neighbours, *the second command*, and not *the first*. It is because it has a necessary dependence upon the *first* ; which not only in the order of nature goes before it, but gives birth and being to it. Our first and best regards are naturally due to him, to whom we owe our  
being

being and life, and all the benefits of life, SERM. and all the hopes we entertain. And what- VII.  
ever respect we owe to our fellow creatures must necessarily arise from his having placed them in that relation to us, which calls for that respect. If that God, who is our creator and benefactor, is the same who created the rest of mankind; and if he accounts them, as he does ourselves, the subjects of his government, and makes them the care of his providence; they are upon this account entituled to our affection; and in giving proofs of this affection to them, we prove our affection to God our common parent and benefactor. But from this account it is plain, that it must, in order of nature, follow that *love* which is owing to God himself.

You see, I am considering the *love of our neighbour* as a point of religion towards God. 'Tis in that sense, that our Lord delivers it as *God's command*, and a part of his *law*. And in this religious respect, it is certain, that it must necessarily be a *secondary* duty, and cannot according to the nature of things be the *first*. It is true, that the circumstances in which we come forth into being, helpless infants, do unavoidably call for the first exercise of our affections towards our earthly parents, and those others who help to bring us forward into a more mature state of life, wherein we become capable



SERM. capable of religious sentiments. And ac-

VII. cordingly, there is no doubt, that we do  
 ~~~~~ exercise affection towards one another, be-  
 fore we come to learn the *love of God*.
 But all this is owing to the animal condi-
 tion, in which we come into the world,
 and the gradual use of reason and judg-
 ment, as we grow up. Yet it is very plain,
 that we can never *love our neighbours* in obe-
 dience to *God's command*, which is the case
 in our text, till we have first learned, in the
 exercise of our reason and judgment, to *love*
that God, whose creatures and subjects we
 are, in common with our neighbours. And
 further it is evident; that whatever affection
 we may shew to our fellow creatures before
 we come to learn the *love of God*, and what-
 ever may be the principle, upon which we
 ground this *love of our neighbour*; no prin-
 ciple whatever can give such good security
 for our *doing towards them as we would wish*
they would do towards us, as the religious
 principle of a sincere and fervent *love to-*
wards God. Men's regard to *themselves* may
 restrain them from those injurious courses,
 which they know the laws will punish, or
 which they think would bring them into
 disesteem. But where there is no better
 principle than this; the restraint is off, as
 as soon as there is a strong probability, that
 an injurious or an ungenerous action may
 remain undiscovered: in such a case, there
 is

is nothing to hinder complying with the S E R M. views of a man's own private advantage, or VII. the gratifying his passions. And further, men may see the fitness of being just and kind to their neighbours, as this tends to the advantage of society: or they may exercise that principle of generosity, of which God has laid the foundation in their nature, without considering that he is the author of it, or having any immediate views to him; for there is a sort of *moral sense*, which, in the nature of an instinct, will have a considerable influence to restrain from evil, and incline to that which is good. But neither merely this *moral sense*, nor the additional consideration of what is *fitting* from the *nature of society*, can possibly have that force, in exciting to a uniform course of benevolence, especially in difficult cases, where there are strong temptations to the contrary, as the conviction, that this benevolence is our duty towards the supreme being, to whom we are accountable for our whole course of action. Religion towards God lays us under an unavoidable obligation to be as kind to others, as we wish they should be to us; and to do this as we will answer it to him, who has laid us under this obligation. No other consideration, not even that of the nature of society, can have so strong a hold upon us as this; because no other makes us cognizable for our private thoughts and

SERM. and inclinations ; and there is in many cases
 VII. a possibility of hiding from men the iniquity
 of our actions. But a religious regard to
 the divine being, in our conduct towards
 men, an habitual view towards him in the
 discharge of our relative duties to each other,
 this will effectually secure the practice both
 of justice and of the highest benevolence and
 kindness, that our fellow creatures can de-
 sire from us. But if these offices of justice
 and kindness are the effect of our regards to
 God ; then they are the *secondary* parts of
 our duty, the *primary* regards of respect and
 affection being still acknowledged as his
 due.

I WOULD not have enlarged so much
 upon the good reason there is for our Sa-
 viour to declare, that *love to our neighbours*
 is the *second* branch of our duty, and *love to*
God the *first*, were it not for the strong in-
 clination which appears in many, to make
 us believe, that the whole of religion
 and goodness consists in our behaviour to
 men, and that there is no need of concern-
 ing ourselves much about any immediate
 regards to God. From what has been said it
 appears ; that if you cast away the imme-
 diate regards to God, you cast away all re-
 ligion : and that notwithstanding some mis-
 chief may be prevented, and some good
 done among men from other principles ; yet
 there is no lasting security for a uniform,
 just

just and generous conduct even towards men, where the regard to God is laid aside. SERM. VII.

I PROCEED therefore to make some improvement of what we have been hearing. And

I. By settling the true sense of this *second command*, and by shewing its dependence upon the *first*, we learn the true meaning of several texts of scripture, which otherwise we might be apt to mistake.

PARTICULARLY hence we see what is the apostle's meaning, *Rom. xiii. 8.* when he says, *Owe no man any thing but to love one another ; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* The plain meaning is ; that he who *loves his neighbour* fulfils so much of the law as relates to his neighbour ; or discharges that duty, which by the law of God he owes to his neighbour. But the meaning can never be, that by *loving his neighbour* he is excused from the *love of God*, or from yielding to him his first and best affections. The apostle is speaking of those duties which men owe to one another : and therefore his general observation about *fulfilling the law* can be understood of no other than such duties : nor is it in danger of being misunderstood by any other than perverse minds, which desire to keep as far as possible from any sense of obligation to *love and honour God*. Besides ; it is as foolish as it is perverse, to found any argument of this kind

SERM. kind upon such words. For, whose law is

VII. it, that is fulfilled by our loving our neighbour? Is it not the law of God, that the apostle speaks of? that very law, whereby in the next verse he tells us, we are forbidden to commit adultery, to kill, to steal, to bear false witness, or to covet? all which prohibitions, he observes, are contained in this saying, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. If it is his law; then we are obliged to love and honour him in the first place, in order to the discharge of our duty towards them: and consequently the whole of our duty does not consist merely in doing no man any harm, or even in doing good and kind things towards men; but there is a principle of religion towards God, which must direct these good actions; and that principle of religion will teach us many duties towards God himself.^r

AGAIN, by shewing the dependence of the second command upon the first, we learn the meaning of the apostle James, chap. i. 27. where he says, that pure religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this; to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. The apostle's plain meaning is; that that is not pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God, which does not produce kindness and benevolence towards our neighbours, and government of our own appetites;

*7. No other than this was
the meaning of it, and
the plainest parallel
apostle Gal. 5. 13, 14.
"By these ye shall know
that ye are the law of love
is fulfilled in you
which is the love of God
and of our neighbour."
The apostle James, all
the while, is pointing
to the love of God
towards each other.*

appetites ; but that *that* religion is pure and undefiled, which produces these effects. SERM. VII.
 When the apostle was speaking of *pure and undefiled religion towards God*, his meaning could never be, that kind actions towards our neighbours, and the avoiding of foul blemishes of a sensual kind, could constitute that man *religious*, who should cast off all immediate regards to a divine being ; or indeed that it was possible for a man to be kind and watchful, in a sense of *religion towards God*, without *loving* and *honouring him* in the *first place*, above all other beings. He is shewing the vanity of pretending to be *religious towards God*, without a regard to those relative duties, which God has by his constitution of things made incumbent on us : and he shews in particular the necessity of bridling our tongues, and restraining those impetuous affections, which are apt to break forth in rash and unadvised words, if we would approve ourselves as servants of that God, who has laid these wise restraints upon us. Besides ; there are many passages in this epistle of *James*, and many more in the numerous epistles of *St. Paul*, wherein these apostles press most earnestly a regard to those duties which we owe more immediately to God : and therefore it is abusing them, to infer from particular passages which treat of relative duties, as if these apostles acknowledged there were no

N

special

SERM. special duty owing to God, or as if we did
 VII. not owe him our primary regards.

~~~~~ I SHALL mention but one passage more, which is cleared up by the dependence of relative duties upon the *primary respect* which we owe to God. And that is, *Mat. xix. 16, &c.* In which passage our Lord being asked, *what good thing should be done in order to inherit eternal life*, directs the enquirer to *keep the commandments*; and being asked *which commandments*, enumerates particularly several of the commands of the second table, relating to our duty towards men, without making any mention of duties immediately owing to God. From which silence of our Saviour, concerning the duties immediately owing to God, some have been ready to infer, that he himself did not think them of any considerable importance. But nothing in the world can be more weak, or else perverse, than such an inference as this; when it is evident from our text, and the words immediately preceding, that when our Saviour was comparing with one another the commandments of the *same law*, of which he was speaking in both places, he expressly declared, that to *love the Lord our God with all the heart and soul and mind, is the first and great commandment*; and that the *second* is only *like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. It is evident therefore, that our Saviour must have

have had a special reason for reciting to that S E R M. enquirer in *Mat. xix.* only the precepts of VII. the second table. And it is no great difficulty to see, from the circumstances, what that reason was. Our Lord thought fit to single out the mention of those duties, in which this enquirer imagined he had distinguished himself, and accordingly boasted that *all these commands he had kept from his youth up.* Yet when our Lord recommended to him a very high and extraordinary act of the same *love to his fellow creatures*, in which he so much prided himself; when he bade him *go sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and then follow him* and preach the gospel, in order to do good to the souls of men, and added the promise, that *he should have treasure in heaven*; he plainly discovered, that he had not that high benevolence, of which he so much boasted. This was reason sufficient for mentioning to this enquirer only the duties of the second table, when he asked what *he should do to inherit eternal life.* And it is very certain, that if he had really observed those duties in such a manner, as he would have it believed he had, there is such a connexion between them and the duties owing immediately to God, that he would at once have shewn his love to God and men, in leaving all his possessions, and travelling to preach the gospel; especially when he had



SERM. this immediate call to it by the mouth of

VII. Christ himself, and the assurance given of a  
 ~~~~~ *treasure in heaven.* He would then have  
 shewn, that he was a fit subject for that
eternal life, which he seemed so ready to
 claim. Our Lord's design therefore, in his
 whole conduct in this affair, seems to have
 been to discover to this forward young man
 his deficiency in those things wherein he
 thought himself so perfect; and to give to
 all his hearers an awful caution against the
 pernicious tendency of a worldly mind, up-
 on the enquirer's *going away sorrowful*, with
 regard to his *great possessions*, when it is plain
 that he had some very good things in him,
 and yet for the sake of his *great possessions*
 thought fit to *go away* from Christ, and
 have nothing further to do with him.

THE mentioning therefore the duties of
 the second table in this particular case, as
 what would lead to *everlasting life*, does not
 afford so much as the shadow of an argu-
 ment as if the duties of the first table might
 safely be neglected; especially since, as was
 before observed, our Lord in our text ex-
 pressly declares, that the *love of God is the first*
commandment of his law, and the *love of our*
neighbour only the *second*; besides that there
 is such a connexion between both, that the
 one cannot be regularly and faithfully ob-
 served without the other.

I SHALL

I SHALL, for a conclusion of this discourse, SERM.

II. EXHORT you to remember, that this VII.

second command, to love our neighbour as ourselves, is a precept of Christ's religion, as well as of the *law* which was given to the *Jews*. It is the second commandment of that *law*, which Christ himself declared *he came not to destroy, but to fulfil*; Mat. v. 17. And it is, as we have seen from the passage last quoted, that important command, without obedience to which, according to Christ's own doctrine, we shall not *enter into life*; and that which if we faithfully obey, we shall thereby prove ourselves fitly disposed to enjoy it. The sincere love of each other, the consequent delight in doing good to each other, the readiness to forgive offences, and return to friendship after it has been broken, the avoiding to give needless occasion of grief, the readiness to administer comfort and delight, and all needful supplies according to our power, especially towards those to whom we are tied by any special bonds of relation; and more than this, a universal benevolence, extending even to enemies themselves; are what the doctrine of Christ has bound upon us as our indispensable duty, and wherein he has gone before us by his own most perfect example. The writings of his apostles are full of the same doctrine. And you have seen, in the course of my handling this text, that there is such

SERM. a *likeness* and connexion between the two
 VII. commands, of *loving God*, and *loving his*
 ~~~~~ *creatures*, whom he has placed in a relation to us, that we cannot cast off affection to them, or fail of discharging the duties, which by virtue of the several relations we owe to them, without casting off *religion towards God*.

LET therefore the importance of this our duty, and the evidence of its obligation, prevail upon us to bring our minds to the practice of it. And whereas there may in some cases be great difficulties in our way ; let us remember, that there is not only great importance, and great evidence of obligation in the case, but likewise an admirable beauty in the fitness of the thing, even in those cases where the discharge of our duty may prove most difficult, as in the case of enmities or great provocations. What more beautiful and honourable, what more like to the exalted goodness of God himself, than the forgiving offences, and shewing a true benevolence even to *enemies* themselves? And if we are to *forgive offences* ; in what case can it be so fitting and so beautiful, as in those, where they who have given the offence are in earnest sorry for it, and desirous to have a mutual love and friendship restored? Nothing, I say, can be more fitting or beautiful among fellow creatures, than the  
 return

return to mutual friendship in such a case. SERM. VII.  
And consequently, the keeping at an irreconcilable distance must be a proof of a temper quite contrary to God's law and Christ's gospel : and whoever are the means of those mischiefs, by sowing the seeds of discord, will have a dreadful account to give hereafter.

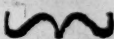
LET us shew our disposition by our practice. Let us give proofs of a universal benevolence, according to the abilities and opportunities we enjoy : but especially let us take care to discharge, with readiness of mind, the duties of those particular relations in which we are engaged : and hereby we shall shew, that we are truly religious towards God. And if we can confide in the promises, which our Lord Jesus Christ has made in the name of his heavenly father ; we may depend upon it, that they who honour him in a faithful obedience to his commands upon earth, shall inherit *eternal life* in his immediate presence above. But what ground have they to hope for the approbation of their judge, in the great day of retribution, who in the present state of trial shewed no regard to those duties, which the mutual relations wherein providence placed them called for at their hands ? How will they hold up their heads before him, to whom they must give an account of their whole conduct ?



SERM. duct? How will they approve their *love of*

VII. *God*, who would not, according to his reasonable requirement, give proof of their affection to those whom he placed in a near relation to them? Let us assure ourselves, that all our pretences to religion and devotion can never blind the eyes of him with whom we have to do; or make him depart from this great branch of his law, the equitable command of *loving our neighbour as ourselves*; that is, of *doing to others what in the like case we would desire and expect they should do to us*. If we are faithful in the discharge of this duty, he will see that we bear a sincere respect and affection to him. But if we refuse it, he will never believe that we *love him with all the heart and soul and mind and strength*; but that on the contrary our affections are engaged and drawn off from him by some corrupt bias in favour of this world; and there is no doubt that he will deal with us accordingly.

LET every one of us therefore lay this lesson to heart: for there is more of *religion towards God* in the discharge of relative duties to each other, than many professed christians are aware. Let every one of us, I say, take care to discharge his own part; and not encourage himself in the neglect or violation of his own duty, from the thought, that his neighbour has not in all points done as he ought towards him. Let him reflect, whether

whether some ill conduct of his own has not S E R M.  
been the means of throwing too strong a VII.  
temptation in the way for the other to over-   
come. Let each of us call back the wrong  
steps we ourselves have taken, and look to the  
regular discharge of our duty in the remaining  
part of our time. And herein let us assure  
ourselves, that bearing with each other, and  
passing by former provocations, will be the  
ready way to bring both sides into the right  
path. Let us make that allowance to each  
other for failings and infirmities, which we  
would hope and desire that God should  
make to ourselves. If men would come  
to this temper, mutual offences among them  
would soon cease ; instead of complaining of  
one another, they would take a high de-  
light in the performance of every kind of-  
fice that could be desired at their hands :  
and in consequence hereof, mankind in ge-  
neral would in this present state be much  
happier than they are, and much better pre-  
pared for that which is to follow.





## S E R M O N    V I I I .

The folly of sloth.

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P R O V . XXvi. 13.

*The slothful man saith, there is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.*

**S**O great is the importance of resolution and diligence, to all the purposes of human life; that it is worth the while, even of the resolute and the active, to have the opposite characters set before them; that by seeing their monstrous deformity they may be the more confirmed in the course they have chosen. And so frequent are the instances of those, who, after a considerable course of activity, fall into indolence and sloth; that the most active need not think it beneath them to be excited to go on in the way which becomes them, by beholding the shame and the misery which attend the contrary. Now these things are beautifully set forth by the wise man in our text, and in two or three following verses; wherein

wherein is contained a gradual description SERM.  
of the *sluggard's* character. VIII.

As to which character: though some part of it is a repetition of what had been delivered before; yet it was, *by the men of Hezekiah*, who copied out, from chap. xxv. to the end of the book, thought worthy to be written over again; perhaps for the sake of ranging in one orderly view several sentences, which have in nature a near relation to each other.

OUR text itself represents the first degree of *sloth*; when a man is loth to stir out of doors about his proper business, be it ever so urgent; and forms excuses for vindicating his sloth, from the views of imaginary dangers. *There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.*

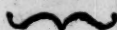
A second degree, mentioned in ver. 14. is when he can by no means prevail upon himself to leave his bed; and will rather turn himself into a thousand uneasy postures there, than rise and follow his employment, even though it might be accomplished without travelling abroad. *As the door turneth upon his hinges; so doth the slothful upon his bed.*

THE third and highest degree of *sloth* is (in ver. 15.) when the *sluggard* is in so much fear of labour, that he will not raise his hand to his mouth, in order to his necessary sustenance, for fear of being tired and fatigued.

*The*



SERM: *The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom : it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.*

VIII.  This last, which is evidently a figurative expression, is a very elegant and lively representation of the incredible slothfulness of some dispositions: and the mention of it, after the other two degrees, is judiciously ordered, to let men see, to what a shameful degree sloth may prevail, and what pernicious and fatal consequences it may produce, if they do not timely shake it off.

NOTHING can more effectually prove a man to be a fool, than such a course of life as the wise man sets forth in this description. And yet sloth is, it seems, of such a bewitching nature, as to make the sluggard believe he is wiser than all his neighbours. Thus, immediately after the description, *Solomon* tells us, ver. 16. *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.* Such men are apt to value themselves for that, which is their just reproch. They presumptuously laugh at those, who take pains to be wise, or to discharge any duty which requires diligence and application. They account it a great piece of folly, to study hard for knowledge, to be laborious upon any account whatever, or to put on resolution of mind, in opposition to any difficulty, that does but seem to lie in their way. Tell them that they are capable of overcoming difficulties,

culties, if they will but exert themselves; SERM.  
give them ever such good reasons for it; VIII.  
assure them of the thing by the experience  
of others, who have had great diffidence of  
their own abilities, and yet, by the help of  
resolution and diligence have proved success-  
ful: it all signifies nothing: *one sluggard is*  
*wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that*  
*can render a reason.* He knows, and is very  
sure, that it is best to take no pains, and to  
make no trial of what he can do. But the  
foundation of all is, that he is resolved to  
sit still, and do nothing.

As to the words of our text, the general  
sense of them is: that men of a slothful  
disposition represent to themselves dangers,  
which either are merely imaginary, and no-  
thing at all in reality; or however are no-  
thing in comparison of what they are pre-  
tended to be; or further, even if they are  
as great as they are imagined, yet ought  
to be no hindrance from pursuing one's pro-  
per and necessary business. The main de-  
sign therefore is, to expose the sluggard's  
folly. But as this folly arises from an im-  
moral principle, and is attended with dread-  
ful consequences; I shall, in discoursing on  
this text, consider

- I. THE folly of sloth.
- II. THE great evil and wickedness of it.
- III. THE mischiefs and miseries with  
which this vice is attended; partly as its  
own

SERM. own natural consequences; and partly as the  
 VIII. effects of God's righteous judgment.



I. THE *folly of sloth.*

Now in order to set forth this folly, there is no need of spending time to describe what *sloth* is; or to trace out the causes from which it takes its rise. 'Tis easy to see, that this shameful indolency of mind is owing to pride, and immoderate love of pleasure, as well as to that unreasonable diffidence, which is more particularly taken notice of in the text. Nor is there any difficulty to find out who are the persons, to whom the character of *slothful* belongs. For we all know, that every man must be accounted diligent or slothful, according to the nature of the employ, which his condition in life requires of him. Some useful employment is expected from us all: and not only they, who are obliged to the constant labour of their hands and sweat of their brows, but they whose employment is of a different kind, are slothful if they neglect it. If a man's affairs require only his inspecting others, and carrying in view the whole state and condition of his substance, with the proper means of that increase, which he is to hope for by commerce with his neighbours: yet if he neglects this, he is in the sense of the wise man as truly *slothful*, as the sluggard whose sustenance depends upon his daily labour. And the  
 same

same is the case, where partly labour, whether of the body or the mind, and partly inspection, is required. A slothful disposition will incline a man to excuse himself from all labour, and all exercise of thought: and, if indulged, will betray him into the opinion, that little or no trouble of his own, of any kind, is needful for him, or fit for him to submit to; and that if there be any diligent application required, it will be impossible to go through it. SERM. VIII.

Now the sluggard's folly is beautifully represented in the text, by shewing that he frights himself with imaginary dangers, when there is really nothing in those monstrous difficulties, which he pretends lie in the way; no *lion in the streets*; no insuperable difficulty, but what subsists in his own slothful mind, unwilling to try what it can do, in a way that becomes it, and is fitly expected from it. The *sluggard* says, *there is a lion in the way*; when none but a *sluggard* would have said it, or thought of any thing like it; and when he himself cannot be supposed to believe it. And the beauty of the expression in the text lies in the strong representation of his folly, in fancying to himself dangers, which are as improbable, as that a *lion* should be found walking the *streets*, whose residence is in lurking places of a wilderness. And he is left inexcuseable, in that he will not so much



SERM. much as look out to see, whether there is  
 VIII. any such danger or not; or however, will  
 ~~~~~ not try what he can do, to overcome those  
 difficulties, which possibly may lie in the
 way, and which, with resolution, would
 certainly be conquered.

'TIS a just aggravation of the sluggard's
 folly, to pursue the similitude in our text,
 even upon the supposition that there was
 some great difficulty, and likewise danger,
 in the way of his duty, or in opposition to
 what is of importance to him. If there be
 only difficulty, and such as may be over-
 come; he who will starve rather than
 struggle, ought to perish. And even if
 there be danger: is it not better to run a
 risque without doors, than to starve within,
 for fear? Is there no possibility of destroy-
 ing a wild beast? Was such a thing never
 done? And is it not wiser and better, to
 expose our person to danger, by attacking
 him, and taking all advantages against him;
 with all the assistance that our friends can
 give us; than to die with fear, for want of
 trying what can be done towards removing
 a dangerous enemy?

THUS the great folly of the sluggard ap-
 pears, take his conduct in what view you
 will. But what can be expected from such
 a temper of mind, as will dispose a man,
 instead of facing any danger, or struggling
 with any difficulty, *to hide his hand in his*
bosom,

bosom, and grieve him to bring it again to his mouth, even when he is hungry? SERM. VIII.

How different from this is the character of the industrious *ant*? And how fitly is the *sluggard* directed to go and learn wisdom of that poor insect; which exposes itself to many dangers, and employs unwearied pains, to make needful provision, in due season, against a future time? *Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8. Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.* That is, she takes the proper opportunities to lay in a store of provision against winter. The *sluggard*, on the contrary, thinks of nothing but living upon the present stock, of what happens to be by him, and provided by others for him; never considering what provision is to be made for a future subsistence, when his friends shall by death, or otherwise, be removed from him.

THE extreme folly of the *sluggard* is further set forth in chap. xv. 19. Which passage, though it is somewhat out of course, as it accounts for the folly by its consequences; yet as it contains another beautiful similitude, additional to those already mentioned, I shall take the liberty to produce it here. *The way of the slothful is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.* In these words the wise man

O

shews;

SERM. shews ; that the sluggard does, by the mere
 VIII. sloth of his disposition, in its necessary consequences, create real difficulties to himself ; all which resolution and application of mind would have prevented. Indulge sloth ; and put off, from time to time, what is of importance to be done : and the consequence will be, that when at length the time is arrived, that it must be done, you will have real hindrances in the way, as great as the walking through a *hedge of thorns*.

AND something to the like purpose is contained in chap. xxiv. 30, 31. *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding ; (which two characters are in the wise man's account one and the same) and behold, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.* Not only unprofitable, but hurtful habits, do naturally take place in slothful minds. For want of taking proper care of his land in due season, the sluggard's work and difficulty increase upon him : *thorns and nettles cover the face of his ground*, to his great discouragement and hinderance, if he would, after long neglect, exercise pains about it. His pains must be doubled, when he is, by a wretched indolent habit, become least fit for labour. And besides all this ; he is by this same habit left without that defence, which diligence would

The folly of sloth.

195

would have provided, against many evils, S E R M.
uncapable of being foreseen. *The stone wall* VIII.
is broken down. 

I THOUGHT it not improper thus far to set forth the *folly* of the *sluggard's* character, in some of those strong and beautiful allusions, with which *the book of Proverbs* abounds. The same *folly* will appear, if we lay aside similitudes, and consider, in the plainest words, even the excuses themselves, which slothful men are apt to alledge in their own behalf. They are all comprehended in that view, which *Solomon* appears to have had in the words of our text; something very frightful and terrible; that is to say, something which the sluggard represents in that view to his own mind, without sufficient reason.

I. SOME are ready to complain, that their employment will by no means consist with their health; that it is destructive to their constitution; and the like. I mention this as a *slothful* excuse, because in many cases it is so; though in some cases it is justly used, and is a good reason for seeking another employ. We may assure ourselves, that our worldly affairs are not designed of God to destroy, but to preserve life, and to support it with comfort. And therefore, if any honest employment, in which we are engaged, is of such a nature, as cannot by any means consist with the safety of our
O 2 lives;

SERM. lives ; the best thing we can do is to leave it,
 VIII. and apply to some other.

~~~~~ THERE are instances of this nature, which try the difference of constitutions ; employments, which are altogether pernicious to some, and very little, if at all, hurtful to others. But yet there is danger of being deceived and overpowered here, by a slothful disposition. And if men give way to every plea of this kind, there is no employment in the world, but what is liable to be excepted against. Some employments, which are necessary in a community, and which consequently are lawful and honest, are rather hurtful than useful to bodily health. In these therefore the greater care must be taken to guard against the danger in prospect. But the mere unhealthfulness of an employment is not a sufficient ground for leaving it, if the circumstances of a man's condition direct him to continue in it : as, for example, if he can, with great care and diligence, provide decently for himself and his dependents, and avoid the most hurtful consequences usually attending. If this be the case ; and a man has no other method of life to apply to, or none but what he is wholly unacquainted with, and has very little probability of succeeding in ; and yet he will leave his employ : there is too much of *sloth* at the bottom ; but reason or wisdom there is none. Such a man  
 rashly

rashly runs all hazards ; and resolves in effect, rather to be made a burden to others, and to lead an unprofitable life himself, than be content with the common allotments of divine providence, in which we cannot properly be choosers ourselves. And yet our folly is the more aggravated in this case, if the employment we are in is such as we ourselves chose, when we might easily see what difficulties were likely to attend it.

BUT there is no enthusiasm in saying ; that our way is marked out for us ; and that there is more than a bare permission of divine providence, in the settling of men and women in the world. There is indeed no fatal necessity : for the course of our lives, abating for the difference between a high and a low condition, is in our own choosing. But even in the way of our own choice, that is to say, within that compass, wherein providence gives us a liberty to choose, the same providence ought to be looked on as concurring with our choice. And if we have been permitted to fix upon a choice, not altogether so happy as we may afterwards wish we had ; yet when we rashly throw ourselves out of the way we have chosen, without very probable views of better success in another, we do at the same time throw ourselves out of the way of God's protection and blessing. And let

SERM. the excuse be what it will, 'tis evident, that  
VIII. reason fails, and *sloth* prevails.

~ THUS much I have said upon the supposition that the complaint of an unhealthy employment be true. Notwithstanding which, we see, in some cases, it will not excuse the complainer from the charge of *idleness* and *folly*.

BUT alas, this complaint is very often made, where there is no room for it at all. The *lion* is not half so fierce, as the *slug-gard* paints him. Nay there is indeed no *lion in the way*; no hurtful beast; no dangerous enemy; but a kind friend. Too many, out of mere sloth, desire to be excused from labour, when their labour would advance and improve their bodily health, instead of impairing it. And this advantage attends most of those bodily exercises which belong to mens lawful employments; particularly some of the most laborious. There may be indeed, and I doubt not there are, some cases, where the labour required by an unreasonable task-master, or voluntarily undergone by men of a covetous disposition, is pernicious to health. These are evils on the other hand, arising from an immoderate value of the things of this world. But, abating for such exceptions, the refusing of labour and diligence, for fear of destroying health, turns against the complainer; so far

is it from doing him any service. This ex- SERM.  
cuse therefore can stand the *sluggard* in no VIII.  
stead; but is at least a proof of his great  
*folly*, if not of something worse.

2. SOME are apt to alledge the trouble of confinement; especially where they think it is not absolutely necessary; that is, where they themselves do not at present see an absolute necessity. And nothing less than a visible, present, absolute necessity will prevail upon some, to submit to the trouble of confinement. They think they may very well divide their time between business and company; especially if they imagine, that there may be some advantage gained in their affairs by the company they keep. There is something plausible in this excuse: but yet it will not hold good. For though it is certain, that some employments do confine more than others: yet it ought to be considered, that it is our duty to suit ourselves to the station, in which the providence of God has placed us, even though it should have some disagreeable circumstances attending. We are not so much to consult our ease and diversion, as our usefulness, and the discharge of a good conscience.

AND whereas this excuse may sometimes come from the mouth of such as mean well: yet if by the help of it they decline any necessary part of their business, as they are in great danger of doing; the disgraceful



S E R M. character in our text will stick close to them.

VIII. The more they relie upon this excuse ; the greater snares, 'tis certain, they involve themselves in ; and the greater danger they incur, of settling a habitual aversion to all diligence. For ease and pleasure naturally steal upon the affections, by imperceptible degrees ; so that the man, who did not at first design to make recreation a part of his business, may in time be altogether engrossed and swallowed up by it. But besides all this, 'tis highly probable ; that where one man spends his time and substance in diverting company, with the mere view of honestly increasing his business and advancing his interest, there are ten thousand, who do it for mere pleasure, and out of a dislike to that confinement, which a proper application to business requires. That is to say ; though the pretence may be honest policy ; yet generally speaking, the foundation is an idle disposition of mind. This is proved, in instances almost innumerable, by the neglect of affairs, even of the greatest importance, for the sake of the beloved diversion ; and by mens leaving their concerns to the diligence and fidelity of others, which by a careful inspection might have been thoroughly secured, but by this love of ease and <sup>r</sup>pleasure are irrecoverably lost. And the

<sup>r</sup> Prov. xxi. 17. *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man : he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*

the extreme *folly* of this conduct I need not SERM.  
aggravate. VIII.

3. A VERY close attendance upon worldly affairs is looked upon as servile and dishonourable, by some who account themselves noble and generous souls. But this their contempt, which springs indeed from an inward aversion to diligence, is so far from being a proof of a generous spirit, that it fastens a just reproch upon those who entertain it. There is no disgrace, no dishonour at all, in a diligent attendance upon any honest employment, be it ever so mean. On the contrary, 'tis a real honour; 'tis a sign that the persons so employed have just notions of things; that they understand the station wherein divine providence has placed them; that they have a true regard to God's disposal, and to their own duty. And if we will needs account some employments mean, in comparison with others; yet we shall generally find, that the mean offices in life are the most necessary: which consideration does at least take off all dishonour from them; and indeed places them above many of those which are accounted superiour.

BUT where is the honour, of neglecting business, to live in idleness, and to be a burden to the industrious? Though no honest employment can be a disgrace; yet the neglect of it is a just disgrace, if it be not immediately followed by an application to  
some

SERM. some other ; as to which we have seen,

VIII. there are great difficulties. 'Tis a proof  
 of a very mean soul, to choose an un-  
 active, unprofitable course of life, and to  
 lay aside an honest way of providing for a  
 family, or so to neglect it as to leave no  
 hope of success, merely for fear of losing  
 the esteem of vain triflers : and such are  
 all they, who can think the worse of any  
 man for that diligence, which is indeed  
 the just ground of a high \* commendation.

THIS bugbear, of a dishonour arising  
 from diligence, is lodged only in mens *fool-  
 ish* fancy, like the sluggard's *lion* in the text,  
 to which it is near of kin : and when once  
 you come to examine into it, or enquire af-  
 ter it, it vanishes away, and comes to no-  
 thing.

4. MANY are ready to say of their em-  
 ployment, that though they cannot pretend  
 there is any real disgrace in it, or any danger  
 to their health, yet it is very disagreeable to  
 their inclination, and that this is the reason  
 why they are not diligent in it. Now this  
 is indeed saying all at once ; and is no doubt  
 a very true saying. 'Tis the love of idle-  
 ness, that makes men account pains and di-  
 ligence, in any regular course of life, as  
 frightful

\* Thus the wise man thought, when he said, Prov.  
 xxii. 29. *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he  
 shall stand before kings ; he shall not stand before mean  
 men.*

frightful as a *lion in the street*. Labour is S E R M.  
this *lion*; and nothing else. And any thing VIII.  
in the world, though ever so frivolous, shall  
in such a case serve for an excuse against it.   
Thus it is generally found, that they who  
make this excuse have as little real liking  
to diligence in any one employment, as in  
any other. Let them, to save appearances,  
try ever so many different ways of life,  
yet they can fix to none; having something  
within themselves, which bears a mortal  
enmity to diligence.

HOWEVER, to prevent all occasion of  
such excuses and complaints, parents ought  
to take great care, while they are seeking  
out such employments for their children, as  
are within the compass of their condition  
in life, to suit the employment, as well as  
they can, to the childrens inclination, and  
not to force or over-persuade them to any  
business to which they have an aversion.  
And on the other hand it were to be wish-  
ed; that in all those schools, where the  
children of the poorer people are educated  
by charitable contributions, care was taken,  
from their very entrance, to enure them to  
labour, by employing a considerable part of  
their time that way; and to discourage that  
vain and pernicious inclination, which is  
found in great numbers of them; to de-  
pend upon a genteel and easy kind of busi-  
ness for their subsistence, instead of such a  
one,



SER M: one, as their own condition and the necessities of the publick call for.

~~~~~ To the excuse of disinclination I might add the pretence which some have used, of incapacity of mind, unfitness, want of due ability, to carry on an employment, to which they have for many years been trained up, and in which, it has been seen, that when they would exert themselves, they have been equal to it, and sufficient for it. But instead of reasoning upon this plea; I shall only advise those who make use of it, and have no right to it, seriously to consider, how just it would be with God to take away from them that judgment and those abilities, which they really have, but will not exert and employ; and to observe, that if they have not that knowledge in their affairs, which with diligent application in due time they might have had; their present ignorance and inability will stand them in no stead in the sight of him, to whom they must finally give up their accounts; and that whatever knowledge is yet wanting, it is their duty, their necessary indispensable duty, to take all possible measures for gaining it, and when they have gained it, diligently to employ it.

BUT this has a near relation to the next head of discourse. And indeed, as to all the other excuses for idleness; instead of setting forth their *weakness* and *folly*, I might have

have considered them under a harsher name ; SERM.
that of downright *wickedness* : for where VIII.
such excuses do really proceed from a slug-
gish principle within, and an aversion to di-
ligence, they are no better than *wicked*. But
I chose first to shew the *folly* of *sloth*, and
the weakness of the pretences by which it
is supported. I now proceed, in a very few
words, to shew

II. THE great evil and wickedness of it.

WHATEVER some may imagine , reli-
gion, and the interest of our souls in a fu-
ture state of retribution, are concerned in
a diligent attendance to our affairs in this
life. For our abilities and powers, of body
and mind, were given us, not to be em-
ployed only and always in what we call
the immediate service of God ; not merely
and only in addresses of prayer and praise to
him, or meditating upon his perfections, or
hearing the instructions of his word. These
are not the only instances of that service,
which God expects from us. He has thought
fit to place us in such circumstances, as ne-
cessarily call for diligence, in order to our
own support, and to the discharge of those
duties which we owe to each other : in
which duties consists a great part of that
religion, that is, of that sincere respect and
reverence, which we owe to himself, the
common father and governour of all. The
relation which we bear to each other in
society

SERM. society is the necessary consequence of that
 VIII. condition, in which God has sent us all
 ~~~~~ forth into being. And that condition is  
 visibly such ; that though some may for a  
 while be subsisted by the diligence and  
 kindness of others ; yet all must perish, if  
 all lay aside industry, and none exercise care,  
 to provide for themselves, and for those who  
 are really helpless. Consequently every one,  
 who is not helpless, but can contribute to his  
 own support, and to the benefit of the com-  
 munity, is guilty of a wicked abuse and per-  
 version of those powers, which his creator  
 gave him, wherewith to be useful. He will  
 therefore, as a wise and righteous governour,  
 and as a friend to the whole community of  
 mankind, punish these disorders. He in-  
 fallibly knows, what abilities he has given  
 to every one. The *sluggard* falsely denies,  
 and basely conceals, the powers which he  
 really has. He *charges God foolishly* and  
 wickedly, as if he had not afforded to him  
 what was needful for him. He becomes  
 a burden to others : and unnecessarily, and  
 unrighteously increases their care and fatigue ;  
 besides that he suffers the faculties of his  
 own mind to run to ruin, which might  
 have been improved to useful purposes.  
 Now these are certainly moral evils ; for  
 which a heavy account must hereafter be  
 given. They are condemned, by the con-  
 curring voice of natural and revealed reli-  
 gion.

gion. Particularly, they are condemned by S E R M. all those testimonies, which I have brought VIII. out of the book of *Proverbs*, to shew the *folly* of sloth; and by almost innumerable others, which might be produced out of that and other sacred writings. But this cause may safely be decided by the reason of the thing, from the testimony which every man has in his own conscience relating to it. I shall have occasion to mention both the one and the other kind of testimony under the next head. And therefore I forbear to expatiate any more upon the mere *wickedness* of sloth; that I may have a little time to consider,

III. THE mischiefs and miseries with which this vice is attended; partly as its own natural consequences, and partly as the effects of God's righteous judgment.

IT is in the very nature of this vice to stupify the mind, and lay the intellectual faculties asleep. This is the wise man's own observation, Prov. xix. 15. *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.* The consequence of which is, in the next words: *the idle soul shall suffer hunger.* But whatever the consequence may prove; out of this sleep the sluggard will not suffer himself to be roused. He is still longing to return to it, if he happens to be disturbed; as the same sacred writer beautifully observes, chap. vi. 9, 10, 11. *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?*



SERM. *gard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?*

VIII. *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth; and thy want as an armed man.* Dreadful effect of a slothful disposition! but yet as natural, as it is for sloth to bring stupidity upon the mind. In which condition, while it continues, it cannot possibly attend to its true interests, and consequently must be exposed to ruin. The same words are repeated, and with great propriety, immediately after that passage already quoted, chap. xxiv. 30, 31. where *the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding, are observed to be grown over with thorns, and covered with nettles, and the wall of defence broken down.* All this is the effect of indulging that lazy disposition, which will bring on *poverty*, in as sure, though silent and unobserved steps, as a *traveler* takes in his journey: and when it does come, it comes attended with terror and amazement, *like an armed man*, against whom no resistance can be made.

IDLENESS naturally tends to poverty. The sluggard will, according to the natural course of his own ways, *be clothed with rags*: there is scarce any possibility of preventing it. Some mens estates indeed are by their forefathers so ordered and settled, that they cannot, without great difficulty, break in upon

upon them. Yet this difficulty have many S E R M.  
men got through; taking more pains in VIII.  
their idleness, if I may be allowed so to  
speak, however taking more pains in a sloth-  
ful, unprofitable course of life, to throw  
away their substance, than would have been  
needful to have secured and increased it, in  
an honest employment.

BUT whatever may be said concerning  
persons of a very advanced condition in the  
world, who have little need to take care of  
any thing more, than to secure their sub-  
stance, and to do good with it: they who  
are in a lower rank must either use some  
diligence, or else must become very mise-  
rable. For since the good things of this  
world are divided into the properties of par-  
ticular persons; it must be either by affec-  
tion as a gift, or by diligence as a merit,  
that the common rank of men must be sup-  
ported. If a man therefore visibly gives his  
mind to idleness, and will not betake himself  
to any employment, or will exercise no care  
when he has entered upon it; his friends,  
and even his nearest relations, will quickly  
grow weary of their gifts; they will much  
sooner, and with more reason, give to a  
stranger, who has been diligent, but unsuc-  
cessful, than to one whom they know to  
be incorrigibly lazy. And what is the con-  
sequence of this, but the utmost danger of  
perishing, even when it may, by the per-

P

mission

SERM. mission of divine providence, be out of his  
VIII. own power to help himself, if he would?

Men may lose their health : and no man so likely to lose it as the sluggard, for want of due exercise : and when he is brought into this condition, and his character is known ; alas, how wretched a creature must he be ? Those indeed who have any tenderness of compassion cannot tell how to let a fellow creature perish, if it be in their power to prevent it. And yet such may be the case ; that many deserving objects presenting themselves to their compassion, may either harden their hearts against the undeserving, or at least put it out of their power to help them. Thus will the wise man's words be fulfilled, Prov. xx. 4. *The sluggard will not plow, by reason of the cold : therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.* But if he only deprives himself of a plentiful subsistence, and is not reduced to the utmost extremity of want ; yet if he has any reflexion within his own breast, what an uncomfortable thought must it be, that he is deservedly despised by his fellow creatures, as a *cumberer of the ground* ?

AND further, how great is the danger, to which the sluggard is exposed, even of falling into the hands of publick justice ? For vagrants are justly punished by the law, for their idleness, and wandering about without

out employment, giving an ill example to SERM.  
others, and drawing them off from their VIII.  
proper business? There is good reason, both   
to confine, and likewise to inflict some de-  
gree of corporal punishment, upon such  
persons, that they may avoid a greater, of  
which they are in danger. For when a  
man has cast off an honest way of life, he  
will yet be desirous to live; and therefore will  
be in danger of taking by force from o-  
thers what he might with honour and com-  
fort have gained with a little diligence. And  
what must be the necessary consequence of  
this, in any well-ordered community? In  
the mean time, how disordered a soul must  
the soul of the sluggard be; when the very  
occasion of his danger is the utter irregula-  
rity of his mind, and his disregard to the  
laws both of God and man?

THESE things I choose to place in their  
true light, terrible as it is; that we may  
avoid even the lower degrees of sloth, which  
are justly hateful in proportion, and will  
grow upon us, if indulged. If we would  
never be enslaved by a habitual idleness, and  
would be sure to escape all the miserable  
consequences of that habit; we must cast  
off the beginnings and the tendencies towards  
it.

BUT further: as to the righteous judg-  
ment of God, there is something to be said  
concerning sloth, besides the natural conse-



SERM. quences of it, which are likewise owing to  
 VIII. his disposal. 'Tis the all-wise God, who  
 ~~~~~ in the course of nature ordered all things  
 so, that idleness should bring poverty, and
 likewise disgrace and danger, along with it.
 But besides this, we may very well look
 upon all the miseries of the sluggard, as in-
 flicted on him by the just judgment of
 God, considered as governour and judge.
 For 'tis the command of God, visibly con-
 tained in the law of nature, that men
 should exercise those abilities which he has
 given, for the decent support of that life
 which he gave, and for doing good to the
 community. And nothing is more plain,
 than that this is the voice of revelation. To
 say no more of the old testament than has
 been said already ; St. Paul lays it down as
 a maxim, and speaks of it as a *command*,
 delivered by him to the *Thessalonians*, that
if any man would not work, neither should he
eat ; 2 Theff. iii. 10. And yet further,
 1 Tim. v. 8. *If any man provide not for his*
own, and especially for them of his own house ;
he hath denied the faith, and is worse than
an infidel. Moreover, Rom. xii. 11. he ad-
 vises, that we be *not slothful in business, but*
servent in spirit, serving the Lord. And
 we

^t That this is the true reading of the text, appears
 from the relation of the parts of the apostle's advice,
 the one to the other : besides that the other reading,
δουλευοντες καιρῳ, *serving the time*, is an evil, justly
 condemned.

we have already seen, that we *serve the Lord*, S E R M. VIII.
when we are diligent in our secular affairs; as we faithfully employ the abilities he has given us, to the purposes for which he intrusted us with them. We *serve the Lord*, in taking a decent care to support that life which he gave us, suitably to the rank of being in which he thought fit to place us. We *serve the Lord*, in doing good to those, who are together with ourselves his creatures, and the subjects of his dominion : and every man's honest industry is, one way or other, a benefit to the publick ; besides that it gives us the opportunity of distributing to the necessities of our poor brethren, which is in many places of scripture owned as an *acceptable service* to God. This exercise, and this usefulness are in many places of scripture required of us. These requirements the sluggard intirely disregards. And therefore the miseries into which he falls may very well be looked on as judgments of God.

As to his condition in the life to come ; 'tis enough to say, that 'tis impossible he should be well prepared for another world, who had no true regard to religion in this life. And we have already seen, that by indulging sloth, men do in a great measure cast off the fear of God, and the love of God, in which things true religion consists. Indeed great sinners may be, and have been

SERM. converted : but while men continue in a
 VIII. state of alienation from God, as it is cer-
 ~~~~~tain they do, who refuse obedience to his  
 known requirements ; they must necessarily  
 be under his displeasure, and will surely  
 feel the consequences of it in that future  
 state, wherein all present seeming irregu-  
 larities will be adjusted. Religion is an active  
 principle : and does in its genuine conse-  
 quence set us upon a vigorous discharge of  
 the duties we owe to God, and for his  
 sake to the subjects of his government.  
 And as the substance of these duties is found-  
 ed in the very nature of things, that is to  
 say, in those relations which we naturally  
 bear to God himself, and to the works of  
 his hands ; 'tis certain, that a being of his  
 perfect wisdom, righteousness and goodness  
 cannot fail of making, some time or other,  
 a difference, a remarkable difference, be-  
 tween the condition of those who attended  
 to their duty, and those who disregarded it.

To conclude. We have seen, that even  
 with regard to our secular affairs, diligence  
 is our bounden duty ; and that the opposite  
 vice of *sloth* is shamefully *foolish* and *immor-  
 al*, and brings after it the most terrible  
 consequences, both in this life, and in that  
 which is to come. Let therefore every one  
 of us for himself take care, that we do not  
 incur this disgrace, and involve ourselves in  
 this guilt and misery.

LET

LET us not stupifie our minds with indolence ; but exert the powers with which we are endued, to the purposes for which they were given. In order whereunto, it will be of great advantage often to ask ourselves, what we believe was our creator's design, in bestowing on us the faculty of reason, and therewith placing us in that condition, in which we find we are ; and what account we expect to give to him hereafter, of the improvement of our talents. And further, as ever we would avoid a settled habit of indolence, let us take care not to indulge ourselves overmuch in any kind whatever, or to desire the intimacy of those, who are visibly so inclined. Particularly it will be of great importance to the younger sort, to remember the advice of *Solomon* with regard to sleep ; Prov. xx. 13. *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty ; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.* And his other advice, relating to indulgencies of the appetite, is of as great importance ; Prov. xxiii. 31. *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.* And the observation subjoined, ver. 32. is as true concerning all other inflaming liquors, as concerning wine in particular. *At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*



SEYM. LET every one of us be active in the way of his honest vocation ; considering how great a part of religion towards God consists in the discharge of duties we owe to his creatures and subjects ; which duties can never be performed by him, who neglects the proper means of supporting himself, and of doing good to others. Let us remember, that even our first parent himself, in his state of innocency, when he was beyond all question lord of this lower world, and when every thing about him was in high perfection, and the ground in particular not yet subjected to a curse, or attended with those disorders into which the deluge afterwards threw it, yet was not excused from care and labour ; but was by his maker placed in a garden, on purpose that he might there be fully employed. Gen. ii. 15. *The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.* And how much soever the sluggard may hug himself in his beloved sloth, and rejoice in casting off all care and concern ; let us think with ourselves how vastly superior is the satisfaction of acting agreeably to the design of our nature, and thereby becoming a blessing to the community, instead of an incumbrance and a burthen. Moreover, in every thing we undertake, as well as in the necessary affairs of our respective callings,

lings, let us exercise diligence; because otherwise we are unjust to those, in whose behalf we take a trust upon us. SERM. VIII.

BUT with all these excitements to diligence, let us take this one caution, recommended by our blessed Saviour, *Mat. vi. 33.* that we do not so greedily pursue the things of this world, or suffer them so entirely to engross our thoughts, as to prevent our *seeking in the first place the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.* Let us avoid the extremes of insatiable avarice, on the one hand, and of supine indolence, on the other: and in the middle we shall steer a safe and a happy course.

FINALLY. Though the care and labour of providing for a family are in most particulars incumbent on one sex, from which, beyond all doubt, it is fit they should chiefly be expected; yet I am sure I cannot give just occasion of offence, in recommending to the other sex diligence in their own station. Let them be beautiful in their conduct, as well as in their person: and for that purpose let them exercise as much concern about the one, as about the other. Let them remember, that they must give an account of their whole conduct hereafter. And therefore let them not act, as if they were born merely to divert themselves, and to be admired. If they would deserve and retain that esteem, which it is so natural to desire;

SER M. desire ; let them diligently attend to the  
VIII. duties of their own place ; which are, in  
many particulars, of unspeakable importance  
to the welfare of families. Let them imitate  
the aimable character of the *virtuous woman*,  
who is so highly and so justly commended  
in the last chapter of this book of *Proverbs*.  
And let those, who have not yet been tried  
with the cares of a family, train up their  
minds for future usefulness, by accustoming  
themselves to those habits, which will, in  
every condition of life, secure to them re-  
spect and affection.





## S E R M O N IX.

The intolerable burthen of a  
wounded spirit.

---

P R O V. xviii. 14.

*The spirit of a man will sustain his  
infirmity : but a wounded spirit  
who can bear ?*

**F**OR the right understanding of these words nothing more is needful, than to consider what that is, which of all things in the world gives the greatest *wound* to a *human spirit* ; what one grief that is, which cannot be borne, and under which the *human spirit* cannot support itself, while others are tolerable, if we will but exert the principles implanted in our nature. It seems, that in the opinion of the wisest of men there is some one kind of grief, which gives an *intolerable wound* to the human mind ; in comparison of which all other sorrows, with the occasions of them, are no other than *infirmities*,



SERM. *firmities*, which *may be sustained*, and under

IX. which the *spirit* may remain unbroken.

And there is no need of much deliberation to satisfy ourselves, that the one grief, which so deeply *wounds the spirit*, is a strong sense of having acted contrary to our duty, and persevered in such a course, as we cannot justify to our own minds. This is the intolerable burthen spoken of in the text: which is by the wise man so emphatically called a *wound*, as to shew that nothing else did in comparison deserve that name. Not but that there are many griefs arising from the imperfection of our present condition, which very much *wound the spirit*, and for want of applying the proper remedies, make life a burden. Thus for example, a continued course of sickness, or weakness, or pain in the body, the loss of relatives or friends who have been much endeared to us, ill success in our affairs, reproches which we have not deserved, the adversity of our friends, and much more the ill conduct of those to whom we wish well; and lastly, the untoward behaviour of those, from whom we had reason to expect friendship and kindness; any one of these things is apt to give a deep *wound* to the *spirit*: and much the deeper will it be, if several of these trials meet together, as sometimes they do. No year passes, wherein there are not some *spirits* quite broken with these exercises, and *wounded* beyond recovery, for want

want of applying those remedies, which are S E R M.  
placed within their reach. Yet, compara- IX.  
tively with the anguish of a *wounded consci-*  
*ence*, all these are *infirmities*, which the *spirit*  
*of a man may sustain*; if it were only from  
this consideration, that they are afflictions  
which come upon us without any fault of  
our own: or if in some of them we have  
given too much occasion, yet something ex-  
terior to ourselves has the principal hand in  
them. And further, in most of these cases  
there is no other foundation for our grief,  
than that it is not in our power to alter the  
course of nature, or to prevent the calami-  
ties to which men are liable in this world:  
as in the distempers, the unhappy accidents,  
and the ill success, which attend ourselves  
and our friends, in their separation from us  
by death: in others, that we are not able  
to prevent their follies, and the ill conse-  
quences which they bring after them. Now  
though we cannot avoid being deeply af-  
fected on some of these occasions: yet the  
remembrance of the condition in which we  
are placed, and the exerting of the facul-  
ties with which we are endued, would cer-  
tainly carry us above them.

BUT what remedy is there merely within  
ourselves for a *wounded conscience*? Or what  
relief will it bring to a man, who is stung  
with the remorse of a shameful action, and  
especially of a wicked course of action, to  
alledge

SERM. alledge the strength of the temptations to

IX. which he gave way, and the weakness of his natural powers to resist; when after all he is conscious to himself, that there was no necessity laid upon him, that he could not be forced, that he did not exert that power which he had, but voluntarily suffered himself to be betrayed into such actions, as his own reason and judgment disapproved?

'Tis the thought of our own faults and follies, that gives the deepest of all wounds. And if there were not in the mercy of God a remedy provided; there could then be no answer given to the question in our text; no such thing as *bearing a wounded spirit*.

It was the sense of this, that occasioned those words of the psalmist, Psal. xli. 4. *I said, Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.* Shame and sorrow were the wounds, for the healing of which he here applied to divine mercy, as his only remedy. That God, against whom he had sinned, and he alone, could heal the wounds, which the sense of sinning against him had made in his soul. It was therefore the same thought, which made him in Psal. xxxii. speak in such a rapture concerning the *blessedness of the man, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* It was this that made him say: *when I kept silence, my bones waxed*



waxed old, through my roaring all the day long : SERM.  
for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me : my moisture is turned into the drought IX.  
of summer. Selah. And it was this, which  
made him in the next words express so  
much joy, upon having acknowledged his sin  
and received pardon. *I acknowledged my sin  
unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid :  
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto  
the Lord : and thou forgavest the iniquity of my  
sin. Selah. For this shall every one that is  
godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest  
be found : surely in the floods of great wa-  
ters, they shall not come nigh unto him.*

THE sense of God's pardoning mercy can  
give relief, when nothing else can. There  
is nothing within the man himself, that can  
heal a *wounded conscience* : the healing must  
come from God alone, whose righteous laws  
have been violated. Men may indeed  
stifle the sense of sin, and take such mea-  
sures as may in time harden their hearts :  
but that is not the case spoken of in our  
text. Our text speaks of a *wounded spirit* ;  
and not of a hardened heart. All there-  
fore that is needful to say of this case is ;  
that if men, to avoid the trouble of a  
*wounded spirit*, do take measures to *harden  
their hearts* against all sense of sin ; this  
will not make their condition a whit the  
better, but indeed abundantly the worse :  
because a true penitent, though ever so  
much



SERM. much dejected at present, with the sense of  
 VIII. his own sins, and attended with ever so  
 many dreadful apprehensions on account of  
 them, will certainly find mercy with God,  
 and will thereby be secured against the evils  
 he feared; whereas there is no remedy for  
 the hardened impenitent sinner; he must  
 fall into the misery which the other ap-  
 prehends, but escapes. Thus we are assur-  
 ed in this same book of *Proverbs*; chap.  
 xxviii. 13. *He that covereth his sin shall not  
 prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall  
 have mercy.* And chap. xxix. 1. *He that  
 being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck,  
 shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without re-  
 medy.*

BUT leaving this digression, we see that  
 a *wounded spirit* is an insupportable burthen,  
 till a sense of divine mercy comes in to our  
 relief. And no wonder that it should be  
 so; when we consider that those divine  
 laws, which we violate by sin, are *holy, just*  
 and *good*; that obedience to them is fit to  
 be practised; and that no reason can be  
 given why we should ever break them; that  
 all excuses and palliations of our guilt can  
 never justify us to our own minds, inas-  
 much as we ourselves chose to do the thing  
 we condemn, and could never have been  
 forced to it. No wonder that such thoughts  
 should give a *deep wound* to the conscience:  
 especially when it is considered, that the  
 being

being against whom our sins are committed, S E R M.  
is the supreme governour of the world, IX.  
armed with almighty power, whereby he is  
able to avenge the violation of his laws; that  
by the perfection of his nature he hates iniquity with a perfect hatred; that he sees and knows all things, so that he cannot be imposed upon by our thin excuses and coverings, nor can we possibly escape his cognizance, when he thinks fit to call us into judgment; and further, that he is that being, to whom of all others we are under the strongest obligations of love and gratitude. Such thoughts as these, I say, when they are strongly impressed upon the mind, give a sufficient occasion to the question in our text; *a wounded spirit who can bear?*

AND thus, I think, we are prepared for some practical reflexions; which are the chief design of this discourse.

I. IF a *wounded spirit* is indeed so insupportable a burthen, in comparison of which all other afflictions are to be considered only as *infirmities*, which the *spirit of a man may sustain*: then how thankful ought we to be for the assurances of pardoning mercy to the truly penitent; and how high a value ought we to set upon the christian religion, which gives to the penitent soul the clearest views of pardon?

THERE is no degree of dejection on the account of sin, from which the gospel does  
Q not

SERM. not sufficiently provide for raising us up.

IX. Our Lord himself expressly calls upon *all those who are weary and heavy laden* (among whom those must certainly be included, who are laden with the burthen of sin) *to come unto him, that they might have rest.* Mat. xi. 28. He invites them to *take his yoke upon them*, that is, to become his obedient servants; and promises that *they shall find rest to their souls*; ver. 29. In the same universal manner he declares, *Job. vi. 37.* that *whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out.* There is no exception made in these invitations. And agreeably thereto the apostle *Paul* declares, that *this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, not excepting the chief.* 1 Tim. i. 15. Accordingly we find, that in the days of Christ's own ministry, *publicans and barlots*, persons who were called *sinners*, by way of eminency above others, yet even they were upon their sincere repentance admitted into the *kingdom of heaven*; while the proud *Pharisees*, who conceived that *they stood in no need of repentance*, were excluded, or rather excluded themselves. We find, that our Saviour *put forth a parable*, on purpose to encourage repentance even in the worst of sinners, and to discourage the *Pharisaical* conceit of no need of pardon. For thus the evangelist assures us, *Luk. xviii. 9--14.* *He spoke*



spoke this parable unto certain, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven; but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

THERE is no sin whatsoever, for which the gospel does not offer us pardon upon repentance: and therefore our spirits cannot be so deeply wounded with the sense of sin, but that there is room to hope for a cure. They therefore injure the goodness of God, and reproch his wisdom and power in the constitution of the gospel, who presume to say, that their sins are beyond the reach of God's forgiveness. It is only their want of true repentance that can exclude them. The blessed God offers mercy through the Son of his love. He shews, by sending him into the world, that he desires they would be reconciled unto him. This is the

Q<sup>2</sup>

very

SERM.  
IX.



S E R M. very purport of the ministry of reconciliation:

IX. *that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.* And in the following verses the apostle *intreats men in Christ's stead, that they would be reconciled unto God*, from this argument; *because God hath made him to be a sin-offering for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; that is, that we might be accepted and justified through his mediation.*

T H E R E is therefore provision made by the gospel, for healing the deepest wounds which sin hath made. Only it is necessary, that we do in earnest repent of and turn from them. And then shall we feel that *blessedness of the forgiveness of sin*, in which the *Psalmist* so much rejoiced; and which the apostle *Paul* quotes from him, *Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8.* to set forth the glory of the gospel dispensation, in which *God imputeth righteousness* to the believing penitent, *without the works of the law.*

H E R E therefore is a sufficient answer to the question in our text. If the anguish of a *wounded spirit* is such, that *none can bear it*; yet God can and will heal it, if the spirit can but submit to be cured in God's own way. Let all those evils, which have given these *wounds*, be sincerely abhorred, renounced and forsaken: let a humble application

plication be made to the *father of mercies*, S E R M.  
in the name of his Son, whom he hath ap- IX.  
pointed the mediator of a covenant of grace: ~~~~~  
let pardoning mercy be thus sought: and  
the *wound of the spirit* will soon be healed.  
In every dispensation, from the time when  
sin came into the world, the sincere return  
from folly, and the earnest application to God  
for mercy, has always been the way, and the  
only way, to heal a *wounded spirit*. Particu-  
larly, we have seen from *Psal. xxxii.* that this  
was the way which *David* took. But it was  
proper to take notice of the high value we  
ought to set upon the gospel; because that  
dispensation gives greater encouragements  
to the sincere penitent, and more clear  
views of the pardon of sin, than any other  
ever did.

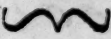
II. IF under the gospel we have these  
clear views of pardon set before us, for the  
ease of our *spirits* when they are most  
deeply *wounded*; then why should we suf-  
fer ourselves to be much dejected, especi-  
ally why suffer habits of dejection to pre-  
vail over us, on account of those *infirmi-*  
*ties*, those weaknesses of our present con-  
dition, which a *human spirit* might sustain?  
Why do we so much debase our faculties;  
why so much disparage that excellent re-  
ligion which we profess? Can we have the  
pardon of sin; and can we not comfort  
ourselves under worldly disappointments?

Q3

Why

SERM. Why should we not still maintain a cheerfulness of spirit, notwithstanding our difficulties? Is the happiness of our minds bound up in external things? Is sickness or weakness of body a good reason why we should never *rejoice in spirit*? Are all other comforts of no value? and particularly, is there no comfort in the hopes of a happy immortality? If some of our friends are called away from us; is there no pleasure or satisfaction to be taken in the loving kindness of God? If we have ill success in our worldly affairs; will that justify us in casting away all composure of mind? Do we think this is the best way towards gaining the success we desire? Or is fretting and repining at present the way to future ease and comfort? If we suffer reproch, and know we have not deserved it; why should we vex ourselves as if we really were to blame? Fortitude will do more towards clearing our reputation, than an unmanly dejection, or a boisterous passion, can possibly do. But besides that, the sense of our own innocency ought to make us easy. Again, if they, to whom we wish well, take ill courses; or they, from whom we have reason to expect friendship, deal unkindly with us; let us ask ourselves coolly, whether the ill conduct of others ought to be suffered to make our minds unhappy? If we do what we can to prevent the evil courses  
of

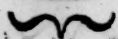


of the one, and do not give a just occasion S E R M.  
for the unkindnesses of the other ; we ought IX.  
to content ourselves with discharging our   
duty ; and not lose the peace of our minds  
and the comfort of our lives, for what we  
are not able to help. And the same thing  
is to be said with regard to those adversi-  
ties, into which our friends fall, without  
any fault of ours contributing thereto. A  
generous compassion towards them will  
highly become us. But if we ought not  
to suffer our minds to be quite cast down  
even with our own adversities ; 'tis certain  
we ought not to suffer it with regard to  
others. The government of all things is  
not in our hands : and we ought to be ha-  
bitually sensible of this, and content with it.

'Tis worth the while to observe, with  
regard to all the particulars which have  
been mentioned, that we bring the greater  
reproch upon our religion, by suffering our  
minds to be overmuch dejected with world-  
ly disappointments, because history furnishes  
us with the examples of many heathens,  
who have borne afflictions in a most be-  
coming manner, and encouraged those a-  
bout them to do the like, with such argu-  
ments as I just now suggested. And shall  
it be said, that *their spirits sustained the*  
*infirmities* of a state of trial ; and that ours,  
under the advantages of the gospel dispen-  
sation, sunk under those infirmities ? Shall



SERM. it be said, that poverty, and disappoint-

IX. ments, and reproches, and loss of friends,  
 and a great variety of injurious treatment were well and decently borne by heathens, who had not the benefit of a divine revelation; and that these same trials make a christian lose all government of himself? Of what advantage then is such a man's christianity to him? How can he be said to live agreeably to the rules of it? And if he does not this; how can he entertain the hope of that glorious inheritance, which it sets before him? If we would enjoy the christian's happiness, we must lead a christian's life; and remember, that christianity was designed to raise us above the things of this world, to those of a better. We must remember, that God is the governour of all things; and conclude, that as he is supremely wise, he has some wise end or other, unknown to us, for suffering things to come to pass in such a manner as we ourselves should not have chosen; that by reason of the perfection of his holiness he cannot be injurious to us, or to any of his creatures; and that because of his perfect goodness we have reason to believe, that he has kind and gracious designs upon the whole, in the dispensations of his providence. On all these accounts we should be so far from suffering our minds to be quite cast down with our own or our friends dif-

disappointments, that we should rejoice at SERM.  
the thought, that God is at the head of af- IX.  
fairs ; believing that all things are by him  
ordered in the best manner ; and hoping,  
that our present condition will at length  
turn out to our greatest advantage.

THIS was the pious use, which the *Psal-*  
*mist* made of the reproches and oppressions  
of his enemies ; *Psal.* xlii. 5, 11. and *Psal.*  
xliii. 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul ;*  
*and why art thou disquieted within me ? hope*  
*thou in God : for I shall yet praise him, who is*  
*the health of my countenance, and my God.*  
He had mentioned such difficulties, as would  
have quite cast down a less pious and less  
judicious mind than his own. But after  
the mention of all his difficulties, when  
once he bethought himself of God as *his*  
*God*, the foundation of his *hope*, and the  
proper object of his *praises* ; he immedi-  
ately asked his soul, why it was cast down  
and disquieted at all ; as knowing there  
was still a sufficient reason why he should  
maintain chearfulness of mind.

III. SINCE there is *no bearing* the an-  
guish of a *spirit wounded* with the sense of sin ;  
and since some spirits are apt to be so much  
cast down even with the *infirmities* of their  
present condition : let us all take care to  
avoid those evils and follies, which will  
be most apt to *wound the spirit* beyond  
cure, and to strike in with the calamities  
and

SERM. and disappointments in life to make us  
IX. completely miserable. There are many  
~~~~~ men ruined in the peace of their mind all  
the remainder of their lives, by great imprudences ; the remembrance whereof, together with their disagreeable consequences, they are not able to bear. The disappointment enters into their whole conduct, and shews that it has quite spoiled the temper and disposition of their minds. This I have shewn to be wholly their fault, in not applying to the proper remedy of humiliation, and forsaking utterly for the future the evils into which they had fallen. But if it be one of the hardest things in the world, as it certainly is in some cases, to bring the *spirit* to a true humiliation ; and if, for want of this, the *spirit* is in danger of being so dejected and disordered, as to be unfit for any regular or comfortable discharge of its duty : then how careful ought we to be to avoid those follies, which would betray us into this trouble and disorder ? How careful particularly ought we to be in every weighty concern of life ; in every case which is known to be of great moment towards future happiness or misery in life ? A man ought indeed always to have his guard about him, because he may be engaged in some affair of great importance to him before he is aware. An unexpected conversation may
turn

turn up ; wherein by giving a loose to any one irregular affection, a foundation may be laid for unhappiness in the whole remaining course of life. For this reason, good is the advice of the wise man, Prov. iv. 23. SERM.
IX.

Keep thy heart with all diligence : for out of it are the issues of life. Let the heart be kept : and the conversation will be secured.

And if by *keeping our hearts*, we can be so happy as to *bridle our tongues*, restraining them from whatever is unworthy of our character as men and christians : we shall go through the world without the bitter anguish of a *wounded spirit* ; and shall in all probability escape that unreasonable dejection of mind, which is the case of some when they meet with disappointments. We shall in this way be most likely to conciliate love and friendship in the hearts of those with whom we converse. We shall however have the inward satisfaction, that we have not done any thing towards making our neighbours our enemies. But besides this ; such a guard upon ourselves will, in the ordinary course of affairs, make them our friends ; and will incline them to pity and help us in any distress, into which the providence of God may suffer us to fall. Now the very compassion of friends is some relief. But if their friendship is built upon the inward esteem of their minds, upon having observed in us some-

SERM. something that was really good, as well as
IX. inoffensive; there is great probability that
~~~~ it will extend further.

BUT for the same reason that compassion is in itself some relief, and gives the hope of that which is more substantial; how great must be the misery of those, who fall into adversity by creating enemies to themselves, and who by their ill conduct make their friends become their enemies? Whence shall their relief come; either to their minds, or to their affairs? Even the assistance which they do receive will be attended with bitter reflexions in their own minds; whereby their misery will be doubly increased.

WHAT great care therefore ought young persons especially to take, that they may settle such habits in their early days, as may secure them in the regular practice of their duty, and prevent their being betrayed into sorrow in the course of life? Let them remember, that one single false step may be so circumstanced, as to make them bow down their heads with grief all their lives after. And in such a case, even though they should recover by repentance, and retain their integrity afterwards, and discharge the ordinary duties in life; yet the habitual dejection of their spirits will render it impossible for them to be so useful, as otherwise they might have been. But  
besides

besides this: what wise man would run SERM.  
the risque of losing his peace all the rest IX.  
of his days, for the sake of any one grati-  
fication whatever? Who would endanger  
his being cut off from chearfulness all his  
days, for the sake of gratifying one un-  
reasonable passion once in his life? Is the  
giving way to pride, or to resentment, or  
to sensual affections, or to covetousness, or  
ambition; is the giving way to any or all  
these passions worth the while, when com-  
pared with that uneasiness, which either  
will settle in the mind without true repen-  
tance, or else will have more dreadful  
effects in a future state? And besides, even  
in case there be true repentance; is not  
the shame, the inward shame of a man's  
own mind, continually remaining with  
him, more fit to be avoided, than the pre-  
sent gratification to be desired? The grati-  
fication of any unreasonable passion is not  
worth one pang of the conscience. But  
the danger is, that if that be not cured by  
a timely repentance, it may in time en-  
crease to the anguish of a *wounded spirit*:  
and what recompence will a man have in  
that case from the remembrance, that he  
gratified his inclination in opposition to his  
judgment?

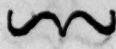
To conclude this head: Let us all be  
persuaded of the great importance of pre-  
serving peace within. It is a blessing greater  
than

SERM. than this world can give : and it is that,

IX. which when settled upon good foundations, this world cannot take away. As ever we would avoid the anguish of a *wounded spirit*, and prevent our being overmuch cast down by disappointments, let us in all things resolve to maintain our integrity ; to be just and kind towards men, and sincerely religious towards God. And wherein soever we have so offended, let us not make the case worse, by refusing to humble ourselves for it : remembring those words of the wise man already quoted, Prov. xxviii. 13. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper : but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

IV. If a *wounded spirit* is attended with so much pain and grief, as we have heard described ; let us by no means add to the burthen of those, whom we see or suspect to be in such a condition. If a man is bowed down with the sense of his own sin, he has sorrow enough : and we have no need, nor any reason, to contribute to the increasing of it, even though some faulty carriage of his towards ourselves should have been the occasion of it. And instances of this kind we may often meet with ; in which it would be very ungenerous, and very disagreeable to the excellent scheme of religion whereby we hope for mercy ourselves, to aggravate our neighbour's



bour's affliction. Not only those who have S E R M.  
deserved a very bad character, but good and IX.  
worthy men, may by taking some impru-   
dent steps, attended with unhappy conse-  
quences, be very much confounded, and  
cast down in their minds. And it may  
come to pass, that they may at the same  
time be pressed with other afflictions. Now  
in such a case; even though the unhappy  
consequences of those wrong steps should  
in some measure affect ourselves; yet it  
will much better become us to give all the  
consolation we are able to impart by the  
kindness of our own behaviour, than to ag-  
gravate the grief of our brother's mind by  
distance and coldness. Our religion, which  
requires us to *forgive one another*, as  
ever we would hope for pardon from God,  
directs us likewise to shew this disposition,  
as soon as our neighbour shews himself  
sensible of his fault; and does not bid us  
in all cases to insist upon a direct open  
confession. If we would judge by what  
we ourselves should wish, were we in their  
case, it does indeed direct us not to insist  
upon it: for our Lord has laid it down  
as a rule, Mat. vii. 12. *Whatsoever ye would  
that men should do unto you, do ye even so  
unto them.* We are not therefore guided  
by the religion we profess, if we are not  
ready to meet our returning brother, and  
as much as we can, to save him the trouble  
and



SERM. and the shame which he may think belong to him. We are not guided by the religion we profess, if wherever we see probable signs of a genuine remorse for past miscarriages, we do not endeavour in the kindest manner to support and comfort the *wounded spirit*; if we do not *strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, and say unto them who are of a fearful heart, be strong*. If we suspect this to be the case of any of our brethren, by their declining any innocent pleasures of life, which they formerly enjoyed with a becoming freedom; it will be as much our duty to comfort them with the sure mercies of a gracious God, as to alarm the obstinate sinner with the terrors of his anger. And as there is more probability of doing good with the one than with the other; so shall we be the less excusable, if we do not use our endeavours for attaining so desirable an end.





## S E R M O N X.

No reason to be ashamed of the  
gospel of Christ.

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ROM. i. 16.

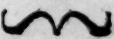
*I am not ashamed of the gospel  
of Christ : for it is the power of  
God unto salvation, to every one  
that believeth ; to the Jew first,  
and also to the Greek.*

**T**H E S E words receive a special emphasis from the consideration of the persons to whom they were addressed ; the inhabitants of *Rome*, at that time the governing city of the greatest part of the known world, and of all others the most learned and polite. And it is evident, that the apostle himself designed the *Roman* christians should take notice, that he had a special regard to the place where they dwelt. For thus the text is connected with the words immediately preceding : *So much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also : for I am not ashamed*  
R of

SERM. of the gospel of Christ. If in any part of

X. the world a man would *be ashamed of the*  
 ~~~~~ *gospel*, or decline entering deeply into the constitution of it, as becoming effectual to the *salvation* of men wholly *through faith*; in a man of so much penetration as the apostle *Paul*, it would certainly have been at such a place as *Rome*. In a place which abounded with philosophers and orators of the first rank; men by whose influence the people were taught to delight in plausible discourses concerning virtue, which yet had little better effect than to please them for the present, or to raise an admiration at the fine genius which was capable of such productions; in such a place, I say, if in any at all, so wise a man as the apostle *Paul*, so learned, and so well acquainted with the world, as by his writings and the history of his life he plainly appears to have been, would surely have avoided declaring, that *the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*; and that *therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith*. At least he would never to the inhabitants of such a polite city have declared, that these were the very things, which made him *glory in the gospel*, instead of *being ashamed* of it.

YET with such kind of declarations, we see, he begins his epistle: and whoever carefully reads the whole will find, that in this
 epistle

epistle he designedly exercises more than SERM.
ordinary care to possess the minds of this X.
people with such thoughts: the reason 
whereof was, because in such a place as
Rome there was more danger of having such
kind of doctrines neglected and despised,
than in other places.

BUT letting alone whatever was peculiar
to the case of the *Romans*, when this epistle
was written to them, and which might
give the words of our text a special empha-
sis in their minds; I shall employ my
time

I. IN considering the reason itself, which
the apostle gives, why he was *not ashamed of
the gospel of Christ.*

II. IN shewing, that it was a very good
reason, why he ought not *to be ashamed of
the gospel*, but on the contrary to *glory in it.*

I. I SHALL consider the reason which
the apostle gives, why he was *not ashamed
of the gospel of Christ.*

HIS reason is, because *it is the power
of God unto salvation to every one that be-
lieveth.* And when he adds, that it is
so *to the Jew first, and also to the Greek;*
his meaning is, that the *Jews* herein
had the advantage over all other nations,
in that the revelation of the gospel was
first and more immediately made to them,
by the birth and ministry of Christ a-
mong them, and by means of the prophe-

SERM. fies delivered many ages before, by prophets
 X. of their own nation, to prepare them for
 the reception of his doctrine. But though
 herein the *Jews* evidently had an advantage; yet the reason why the apostle declares that he glories in the gospel (which is his meaning when he says that *he is not ashamed of it*) is, that it is *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*, without exception to *Jew or Gentile*; that wherever or by whomsoever the gospel of Christ is embraced, that *faith* by which it is embraced is effectual to the *salvation of the soul*, and thereby demonstrates the mighty *power of God*, with which the gospel is attended.

THE *salvation* of which the apostle here speaks, and which the *power of God* effects by the *gospel*, is a deliverance from the power and dominion of sin, and a bringing of the soul to a fitness for everlasting happiness. This is the *salvation* which Christ came to effect; *the saving his people from their sins*, Mat. i. 21. *the destroying of the works of the devil*, 1 Joh. iii. 8. And it is very evident from the whole constitution of the gospel, that it has this tendency. The great stress, which our Lord himself and his inspired followers constantly laid upon holiness of heart and life, and the declared design of his death, *to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good*

good works, concur to shew the truth and S E R M.
propriety of the apostle *Peter's* expression, X.
relating both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, when he ~~~~~
affirmed in the synod at *Jerusalem*, Acts xv.
9. that God put no difference between the
one and the other, *purifying their hearts by*
faith.

Now so great is the *work of purifying the*
heart, so great the change effected thereby ;
that it is justly ascribed to the *power of*
God. And this power, and its tendency
towards producing such an effect, are more
signally displayed in the gospel, than in any
other dispensation ; though in all dispensa-
tions the Spirit of God has graciously assisted
and encouraged those, who have with hum-
ble and teachable minds desired to know
and practise his will.

BUT the way, whereby we become par-
takers of the benefits which the gospel is
calculated to convey, is a hearty *belief* in
that God who is the author of it. 'Tis in
this way alone, that the *power of God*
does through the gospel exert itself to
our *salvation*. If there are in the gospel
greater advantages and encouragements
given for placing our trust and confi-
dence in God, than in any other dispen-
sation, as it is certain there are ; yet with-
out an intire trust and confidence in him,
without our acquiescing in the measures pro-
vided

SERM. vided by him, *his power* is not exerted to
 X. *our salvation.*

~~~~~ To this the apostle refers in the verse immediately following our text: wherein he either explains what he had affirmed in the text itself, or else gives a further reason why he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He had affirmed, that *the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.* And then he adds: *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

HERE the apostle shews, that *the righteousness of God*, that is, the righteousness wherewith God in the constitution of the gospel justifies, or denominates and treats us as righteous, is all through, from one end to the other, founded in *faith.* And there-  
 upon

" To this purpose Dr. Wells, in his annotations, gives an ingenious account of those words, *δικαιοσύνη Θεῷ ἐκ πίστεως ἐς πίσιν*, rendring them *the righteousness of God by faith unto faith*, and making *faith*, in the latter mention of it, to signify *all those that believe*; as in other places of St. Paul's writings *circumcision* manifestly stands for *the circumcised*. He refers to chap. iii. ver. 21, 22. as the parallel passage, by which this, of chap. i. ver. 17. should be explained: observing that *δικαιοσύνη Θεῷ* here, is there more fully expressed, *χωρίς νόμου δικαιοσύνη Θεῷ*: and ἐν αὐτῷ, (in the gospel) here, is expressed there by an equivalent *νῦν now*, that is, under the gospel: ἀποκαλύπτεται here, is explained by *πεφανέρωται* there: and so ἐκ πίστεως here, is fully explained by *διὰ πί-*

upon he refers to a saying in one of the prophets, *Hab. ii. 4.* signifying, that under all dispensations justification is by faith: *The just shall live by his faith.* It comes to the very same thing, if you transpose these words as some choose to do: *The just by faith shall live:* for this signifies, that none but they who are just through faith shall live.

THERE is no need to spend much time to examine the force of the apostle's reasoning in this quotation from the prophet. For a little reflexion upon the history of all the dispensations recorded in the old testament will shew, that in every one of them *justification*, or acceptance with God, was always *through faith* in him. And, to save us the trouble of turning to numerous passages in the old testament, we need only refresh our memories with that admirable collection,

R 4

which

εως Ιησὺ Χριστῷ there: and lastly, εἰς πίσιν here, is explained by εἰς πάντας τὰς πισεύοντας there. He further observes, that those words, εἰς πίσιν, in chap. i. ver. 17. seem plainly to refer to παντὶ τῷ πισεύοντι, in the verse immediately preceding: because the purport of the apostle's reasoning is, that *the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to all that believe, Gentile as well as Jew; for therein is revealed the righteousness of God, by faith unto faith*, that is, to all that believe, Gentile as well as Jew: for, as he adds, in ver. 22. of the third chapter, *there is no difference.* Lastly, he observes; that the regular pointing of the words in chap. i. ver. 17. would make the case clearer. For the apostle having said, *the righteousness of God is therein revealed*; he subjoins what sort of righteousness it is; *by faith unto faith*: δικαιοσύνη γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται, ἐκ πίσεως εἰς πίσιν.



SERM. which the author of the epistle to the *He-*  
 X. *brews* has made with this very view, in  
 chap. xi. It is with good probability of  
 reason believed, that the same apostle, who  
 wrote this epistle to the *Romans*, wrote also  
 that to the *Hebrews*. But whoever was the  
 author, he plainly shews, that he was fully  
 acquainted, both with the dispensation of  
 the gospel, and with those which went be-  
 fore it. And this xi<sup>th</sup> chapter is taken up  
 chiefly in shewing, that in the several dis-  
 pensations under which they lived, such ex-  
 traordinary persons as *Abel*, *Enoch*, *Noah*,  
*Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob* and *Moses*, were  
*justified* in the sight of God, by means of  
*their hearty belief* of so much of his mind  
 and will as he was pleased to discover to  
 them for their guidance. He speaks of  
 this their *faith*, as the means whereby they  
 became so acceptable to God, as he there  
 represents them to have been. And it is  
 most evident, that their faith in God was  
 the spring and foundation of all that re-  
 markable obedience which they yielded to  
 him. This quickened their diligence in his  
 service; and proved the means of *purifying*  
*their hearts*, and of bringing them into a  
 happy resemblance of God; which could  
 not fail of being most highly agreeable to  
 him. But God, who saw the principle of  
 faith, from which this obedience and con-  
 formity would proceed, is represented by  
 the

the author of this epistle, as justifying them, SERM. X.  
and receiving them into the number of his  
favourites, on account of that *faith*, which  
he saw they had in him. And herein he  
makes no difference with regard to the dif-  
ferent dispensations in which they lived ;  
though 'tis certain that *Enoch*, and *Noah*,  
and *Abraham*, and *Moses*, lived under very  
different dispensations.

Now while the apostle makes this inci-  
dental quotation from the prophet *Habak-  
kuk*, to shew that in all dispensations *the  
just live by faith* ; and in the same breath  
declares, that the reason why he is *not a-  
shamed of the gospel of Christ* is, *because there-  
in the righteousness of God is revealed from  
faith to faith* ; to me he seems to signifie,  
that the advantage which the gospel has  
above all the other dispensations is, that it  
expresly promises justification to the true  
believer ; that it does this in a much more  
explicite manner, than ever was done under  
any former dispensation.

THIS, I say, seems clearly to be the  
apostle's mind, and to be given as one rea-  
son why he *glories in the gospel of Christ*.  
This however is certain ; that the thing it-  
self is true. For the gospel abounds with  
declarations of this kind from our Saviour's  
own mouth ; that *whosoever believeth in him,  
shall not perish, but have everlasting life* : so  
that we are sure of having eternal life, upon  
our

SERM. our sincere acknowledging Jesus in the cha-

X. racters of saviour and ruler, in which the  
 ~~~~~ gospel sets him before us. But though the  
 gospel abounds with such declarations, for
 the encouragement of our faith; other dis-
 pensations did not. From all of them this
 indeed might be gathered; that he who
 believed in God and obeyed the significa-
 tions of his mind, should be accepted of
 him: but in none of them are there such
 express, such strong, and such plentiful en-
 couragements to faith, as in the gospel of
 Christ: and therefore if such encourage-
 ments to faith are indeed, to persons in our
 condition, desirable blessings, the apostle had
 good reason to say, *he was not ashamed of
 the gospel of Christ*. This therefore is what
 I shall under the next head enquire into.

BUT it is proper to observe; that though,
 in the quotation from the prophet, the apo-
 stle had respect to other dispensations besides
 the gospel; yet when he affirms *he is not
 ashamed of the gospel of Christ*; and gives this
 reason for it, *that it is the power of God
 unto the salvation of the believer*, and that
*therein the righteousness of God is revealed
 from faith to faith*; his immediate view is,
 not so much to place the gospel above all
 other dispensations, as to shew, that the
 principle of faith in God, under such a
 favourable dispensation as that of the gos-
 pel, has a vast advantage above the mere
 deductions

deductions of reason in matters of religion. SERM.

This was his direct view, in saying to the X.

Roman christians, in the words immediately preceding my text, *So much as in me is, I am ready to preach to you who are at Rome also*; and then adding in the words of the text, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*. He signifies; that the plain and strong manner, in which the gospel of Christ conveys the mind of God, with relation to our duty and to the hopes of happiness, is to the saving purposes of religion of infinite advantage, both to the learned and to the unlearned, to the wise as well as to the unwise, in comparison of those mere deductions of reason, wherein the *Greeks* and *Romans* were so much delighted.

HAVING thus considered the reason which the apostle gives, why he *was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*; which is this, that *it is the power of God unto salvation through faith*, in opposition to the mere deductions of abstract reasoning: I proceed now

II. To shew, that it was a very good reason, why he ought *not to be ashamed of the gospel*, but on the contrary, to *glory in it*.

Now this appears from the following considerations: that faith in God, such a faith as the gospel requires, will operate immediately and strongly, and upon all sorts
of

SERM. of people who are seriously inclined ; where-

X. as abstract reasoning operates slowly and weakly, and can take place only in a few persons, in comparison of the bulk of mankind.

WHILE I am speaking of the powerful influence of *faith* in God, I desire it may be remembered, that I mean such a faith as is grounded upon good evidence, that the things recommended are indeed the mind and will of God. Even a mistaken persuasion, that such or such a thing is the mind of God, will have vigorous and powerful effects, according to the degree of satisfaction which the mind takes in the seeming evidence for it. But when such mistakes are made in matters relating to practice, it is certain they will not have that salutary effect, which the apostle in our text ascribes to *the belief of the gospel of Christ*. Therefore our great concern is, that our faith be well grounded ; that there be good evidence, that what is proposed to us as the mind of God, is really so. This is that faith which the gospel requires. And when we are called upon to believe, that the gospel is the mind of God, relating to our present duty, and our future happiness ; we are called upon to consider the good evidence on which our faith is to be built. When we are required to acknowledge Jesus in the characters of

of ruler and saviour, we are required to S E R M.
observe ; that the peculiar parts of his doc- X.
trine are suited to our need of him in those
characters ; and at the same time to observe,
that the preceptive part of his doctrine approves
itself to our judgment and conscience, as
being worthy of God, and fit to be recom-
mended to us ; that the mighty works to
which he appealed, the fulfilment of pro-
phesies in his person, his resurrection from
the dead, and sending down upon his fol-
lowers the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are
produced as evidences of his divine mission,
and consequently of the importance of the
doctrine he delivered, and really are good
evidences of what they are brought to prove:
but that the grand design of inviting us to
acknowledge him for our lord and master
is, that by him we may be taught to *deny*
ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live sober-
ly, righteously and godly in this present world,
in the hope of eternal life, which he has pro-
mitted to all that obey him.

'TIS such a *faith* as this, which the gos-
pel requires ; the believing that this is the
mind of God, made known to men by his
son Jesus Christ. And when men can be
brought in earnest to believe, that this is in-
deed the mind of God ; their faith will
have a far more quick and powerful effect
upon their hearts and lives, than can be
expected from a mere train of reasoning,
though

SERM. though ever so plausible and well connect-

X. ed, concerning the fitness of practising moral duties. A belief, that this is the mind of our supreme governour and judge, has a shorter way to reach the heart, than a train of abstract reasoning, even in case all persons were capable of it, and had leisure for it. Even the wise and learned themselves, who are best capable of deducing the obligations of natural religion, from the condition wherein we are, and the relation we all bear to God our creator, and to the work of his hands ; even they, I say, will find abundant reason to acknowledge, that a rule of life, approving itself to the judgment and conscience, and attended with strong evidence of its being the mind and will of God, upon obedience to which they shall be happy, and upon disobeying which they shall surely be miserable, will be much more effectual to the purposes of religion and virtue, than a mere system of morality of their own, though drawn up with ever so great exactness and propriety. For the wise and learned, as well as the unwise and the unlearned, have a variety of temptations and snares in the way of their virtue : and it is a vain thing to imagine, that any deductions they have made concerning the fitness of practising such and such duties will have that force with them, which may be expected from a strong

strong conviction, that God herein requires S E R M.
their obedience, and that he has given as- X.
surance by a revelation from heaven, that 
he will reward the obedient, and punish the
disobedient.

BESIDES, it is to be considered, which
has been once or twice hinted already; that
whatever deductions men make concerning
the fitness of practising moral duties, they
are no way inconsistent with an immediate
regard to the mind of God, as set forth
in the gospel. Faith is an additional help
to all our moral reasonings: but it gives
that force and influence, which they can-
not supply. They who *believe the gospel of
Christ*, and hope for *salvation* through it,
have all the same advantages from their
reasonings about the fitness and beauty of
virtue, as they have, who reject the gospel,
and depend wholly upon their own deduc-
tions. And they have the pleasure of see-
ing, that the preceptive part of the gospel
is built upon such reasonings; and that the
grand stress, in the assurances of future
happiness, and in the denunciations of fu-
ture misery, is laid upon mens conforming Mat. vii.
or not conforming to the mind of God, 21, 23.
with respect to those things which are really Rom. ii.
good in themselves; that is, upon *living* 6--10.
soberly, and righteously, and godlily in the pre-
sent world. They vilely abuse the gospel,
who represent it as superseding the useful-
ness

SERM. though ever so plausible and well connect-

X. ed, concerning the fitness of practising moral duties. A belief, that this is the mind of our supreme governour and judge, has a shorter way to reach the heart, than a train of abstract reasoning, even in case all persons were capable of it, and had leisure for it. Even the wise and learned themselves, who are best capable of deducing the obligations of natural religion, from the condition wherein we are, and the relation we all bear to God our creator, and to the work of his hands; even they, I say, will find abundant reason to acknowledge, that a rule of life, approving itself to the judgment and conscience, and attended with strong evidence of its being the mind and will of God, upon obedience to which they shall be happy, and upon disobeying which they shall surely be miserable, will be much more effectual to the purposes of religion and virtue, than a mere system of morality of their own, though drawn up with ever so great exactness and propriety. For the wise and learned, as well as the unwise and the unlearned, have a variety of temptations and snares in the way of their virtue: and it is a vain thing to imagine, that any deductions they have made concerning the fitness of practising such and such duties will have that force with them, which may be expected from a strong

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ture misery, is laid upon mens conforming
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sent world*. They vilely abuse the gospel,
who represent it as superseding the useful-
ness

Mat. vii.
21, 23.
Rom. ii.
6---10.

S E R M. nefs and importance of moral reasonings,
 X. and as introducing enthusiasm in their stead.

~ The gospel leaves room to all the sober reasonings we can exercise, about the beauty and excellency of those things which are good in themselves : only it has the advantage of recommending the same things with the assurance, that it is the mind of God our supreme governour and judge, that we should practise these things, as ever we would hope for his approbation in the present state, or avoid his just displeasure in the state of retribution which is to follow.

AND besides that the authority of God, considered as the future judge and rewarder of our conduct, is likely to be of more force, than the mere considerations of fitness or unfitness ; let us remember, with the apostle in our text, that *the power of God unto salvation* is most likely to attend his own appointed method. If therefore it be true in fact, that God has employed an extraordinary messenger, to make known his mind to us, relating to our duty and to our happiness ; we run the utmost risque, in neglecting to regard that, and contenting ourselves with our own deductions. But I will for the present let alone this thought ; and only desire you to consider, how much more reason there is to hope, that *the power of God unto salvation* will attend such a *faith* in him as has been described, than the mere deductions

deductions we form in our own minds concerning the fitness of moral duties. If God has in his wisdom and goodness contrived a method, for rescuing us from the power of sin, and preparing us in the disposition of our minds for that compleat happiness which he graciously offers to us; and if together herewith he makes known to us the provision he has made for receiving penitent sinners to his mercy, consistently with the honour of his righteous laws: we have surely much more reason to hope for acceptance with him at present, for success in our endeavours to gain habits of virtue, and for the enjoyment of future happiness, by conforming to this divine prescription, than by casting it aside, and consulting only the thoughts of our own minds. There is the *salutary power of God* attending the one: and in the other there is no more than the force of our own reasonings, which we are required to employ even in the exercise of our faith.

LET us consider, that if we rely entirely upon our own reasonings, where there is a revelation of the mind of God, to which we are required to adhere; there is infinite danger of making our reasonings themselves warp in favour of any darling passion of our own. Even the word of God itself, we see, is perverted by some, in favour of their beloved lusts. 'Tis evident that this is done

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in

SERM. in some cases. But in things of highest
 X. importance, the declarations are so plain
 ~~~~~ and strong, that there is no turning them  
 aside : and therefore it is more for the interest of those, who are disposed to indulge themselves in what they cannot at present thoroughly approve, to reject whatever comes under the notion of a divine word, and to have recourse only to their own reasonings. For where there is a strong inclination to what the judgment is not thoroughly satisfied in ; there are a thousand excuses or palliations to be found out : the same thing may be set in such a variety of lights, the bias of the affections assisting ; that what was formerly something frightful, and would still by the light of God's word appear odious, may be made to appear first tolerable, and afterwards pleasing.

LAY now these things together : and then you will see how much reason the apostle had to *glory in the gospel of Christ*, as being *the power of God unto the salvation of the believer*. Remember, that besides the comfort of its regarding us as sinners, and making provision for our pardon and acceptance with God, in such a way as is honourable to his government ; it has a tender regard to that weakness which sin has brought upon us, and which is so visible in the far greatest part of mankind ; that it considers mankind as they really are ;  
 not

not taking the bulk of them for philoso-  
phers, nor yet for idiots or natural fools ;  
that it considers them in general, as not  
very well qualified to form regular schemes  
of morality, such as shall sufficiently influ-  
ence their conduct ; and yet considers them  
as capable of receiving powerful and effec-  
tual impressions of the mind of God their  
governour and judge, concerning those sen-  
timents of good and evil which he has im-  
planted in their nature, and concerning the  
consequence of attending to or disregarding  
the significations of his mind. In this view  
the gospel is presented to us : *and thus it  
becomes the power of God by faith unto sal-  
vation.* And from this seasonable aid to  
our weakened nature, we have the highest  
reason to join with the apostle in declaring,  
that *we are not ashamed of the gospel of  
Christ.*

FOR the improvement of this discourse,  
I shall consider how much it becomes us  
to imitate the apostle, in our zealous regards  
to the *gospel of Christ*, at a time when ma-  
ny are endeavouring to undermine it and  
turn it into ridicule. If it is so calculated,  
as to be a fit instrument in the hand of God  
for the exerting of his mighty *power unto  
the salvation of the believer* ; then it highly  
becomes both ministers and people, every  
one of us in our respective stations, to shew  
our zealous regards to it, in opposition to

S E R M. such as labour to bring it into contempt.

X. It was in the character of a preacher of the gospel, that the apostle wrote the words of our text, and likewise those of the preceding verse, when he declared his resolution, to endeavour to come and *preach the gospel at Rome*, though he knew the people there were under the guidance of men, who despised the doctrine of faith in Christ, and accounted it mere *foolishness*.

IN a day therefore, wherein there are such numbers who tread in the steps of those despisers, and who are for magnifying their own reasonings in opposition to the doctrine of Christ, I choose to take notice, in the first place, how much it becomes ministers to shew their high esteem of the gospel in its native simplicity, by treating it as a matter of *faith*, as a declaration of the mind of God by his Son Jesus Christ, suited to the condition of sinful men. In this way it is, that *it becomes the power of God unto the salvation of the believer* : and it was for this very thing, that the apostle declared he was *not ashamed of it*, but chose to place it in this light even at *Rome*, where he knew some would despise it.

INSTEAD of choosing this way, he could have told the christian *Romans*, that when he came among them he would do as their philosophers did ; employ himself chiefly

chiefly in discoursing upon the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice, as discoverable by their own reflexions: and if he had believed that this compliance with, and imitation of them was the best and most likely way to bring over them and their followers to the christian faith; he would have thought himself in conscience bound to take this method. But it is plain he thought quite otherwise. He was of opinion, that the method marked out in the gospel was wiser and better, more effectual for the conversion of sinners, and for establishing men in the steady practice of their duty; to set that duty before them under the authority of God their supreme governor and judge; to appeal to their own consciences, that they were sinners against him, and stood in need of his mercy; and to offer this mercy to them, upon their humble submission to receive it in the way in which it is offered. Though the great lines of mens duty were then, and always will be, discoverable by the light of nature; and though the apostle knew, that without a revelation from heaven excellent discourses might be made concerning the beauty of virtue; yet he believed, that the leading men, as the gospel does, to consider even that which is good in itself, as required of them by God their supreme governor, and that which is evil, as what



S E R M. will incur his just displeasure, the offering

X. of mercy to the truly penitent, the giving  
 of the promise of eternal life to the persevering faithful, and in general, the teaching them to lead a life of faith in God, was the most likely way to rescue men from the power of sin, and to prepare them for the happiness which the gospel promises to them : and therefore he chose to shew his high esteem of the *gospel of Christ*, by plainly setting the duties and the encouraging promises of it before them as declarations of the mind of God, and by shewing what evidence there is, that these things are really his mind.

T H I S was the way, in which he chose to shew his regard to the *gospel of Christ* : as appears by that whole epistle, of which our text is a part ; and likewise by his writing to the same purpose to the inhabitants of *Corinth*, a flourishing city of *Greece* ; where, through the plausible discourses of the philosophers, the doctrine of faith in Christ was as much despised as at *Rome*. He determined to know nothing among them save *Jesus Christ and him crucified* ; (1 Cor. ii. 2, 5.) though he knew that the doctrine of the cross was to them foolishness. He would not have their faith to stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. He would deliver to them the gospel doctrine, as the mind of God ; and then

then shew that it was *by the power of God* S E R M.  
 proved to be his mind. He knew, that X.  
 wheresoever this doctrine was received, it  
 would be the *power of God unto salvation* :  
 and therefore, how much soever this was  
 condemned and despised as mere *foolishness*,  
 he would shew his esteem of it, by choosing  
 to preach this kind of doctrine even in  
 those places where it was most despised.  
 Let all christian ministers follow the apo-  
 stle's example : and they will be more  
 likely to make converts to the christian  
 faith in the way which he took, than in  
 any other.

BUT when the apostle told the *Roman*  
 christians, in the character of a preacher,  
 that he was *not ashamed of the gospel of*  
*Christ*, and that the very reason for which  
 he valued it was, *because it was the power of*  
*God unto salvation through faith* ; it is cer-  
 tain that, for the same reason, he would  
 recommend it to their esteem, and persuade  
 them to shew, in their respective stations,  
 the same honourable regard to it. He  
 would, by this same argument which en-  
 gaged his own esteem, excite them to stand  
 up in its defence, in opposition to all those,  
 who should endeavour to bring it into con-  
 tempt ; and much more to watch over their  
 own hearts, lest by any plausible arts of  
 men, or by the powerful influence of ex-  
 ample and custom, they themselves should

SERM. be led away from the simplicity of the gospel. And this is what I would now most earnestly recommend to you. 'Tis certain, that it is more agreeable to the high opinion most people entertain concerning themselves, to attend to a scheme of morals deduced only from their own reflexions, than to hear their duty delivered to them as the mind of God, attended with the assurance of his favour to the obedient, and his displeasure to the disobedient: and more especially it is likely to be disagreeable, to be often put in mind how much we are indebted to God's mercy for the pardon of our sins, and to have this pardon offered to us upon our humble submission to a method of his own appointing, which we could not have discovered by the mere light of nature. There is need therefore of exhorting the christians of the present day to take care, that they be not led away from the gospel, under the pretence of being brought to a more manly and more honourable scheme of religion. Consider, that the *power of God* may be expected to attend the *method of salvation* contrived and appointed by himself; and that it has always had this happy effect where it has been seriously attended to: whereas all the mere reasonings, even of those who were the greatest masters in that faculty, only proved the great want of a sure guidance from

from above, and their own deficiency with-  
out it.

S E R M.

X.

I WOULD by no means discourage you from consulting your own reflexions upon the nature of things, the relation of moral agents to each other, and the fitness of moral duties thence arising. On the contrary, I would recommend these things to you, as of great use and importance ; and particularly as you may hereby be confirmed in your esteem of the gospel, which lays its main stress upon the practice of those duties, the obligations whereof we can thus clearly deduce. But let not this thought supersede in your minds the importance of the gospel revelation ; since it is so evident, that the philosophy of the heathens made considerable advances this way, and yet left the bulk of the world in great ignorance ; and even where it was taught and received, had such very small influence towards rescuing men from the power of sin, and persuading them to the practice of true piety and virtue. How much soever some have abused the gospel ; yet it is certain, that no scheme of religion has ever had such prevalency, in turning men from the evil of their ways, and making them truly good, as that of the gospel ; nor has any scheme of religion in the world ever been calculated so well for effecting that great end. I shall conclude this with only desiring you yourselves to consider,



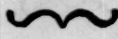
SERM. sider, whether those who have turned their  
 X. backs upon the gospel, and betaken them-  
 selves to what they call the *religion of na-  
 ture* in opposition to it, have thereby be-  
 come better men than they were before ;  
 and whether those in general who cast con-  
 tempt upon the gospel, are by their own  
 schemes made more pious, more righteous,  
 more benevolent, than those who practise  
 the same duties in obedience to the gospel  
 revelation ; or which of the two do, upon  
 the whole, set the example that best deserves  
 to be followed.

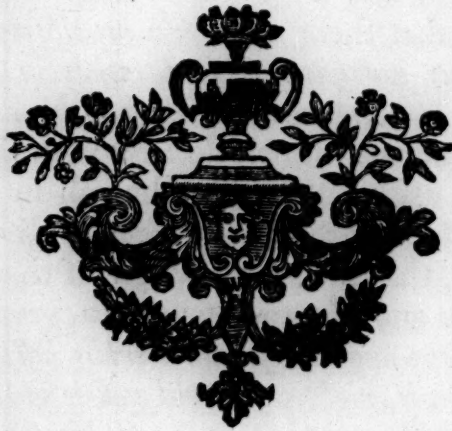
BUT I cannot conclude this discourse,  
 without exhorting you, as christians, to con-  
 sider the obligations consequent upon your  
 professed faith in Christ, and your high  
 esteem of his gospel. Let those who pro-  
 fess the highest respect to it be intreated to  
 remember, that they are thereby laid under  
 the strongest obligations to lead a life agree-  
 able to it. Remember, that the heavenly  
 messenger, who gave notice of the birth of  
 Jesus, declared that he should be called by  
 that name. *because he was to save his people  
 from their sins*, Mat. i. 21. that the apostle  
*John* declares, that *for this very purpose the  
 son of God was manifested, that he might destroy  
 the works of the devil* ; 1 Joh. iii. 8. that  
 St. Paul sets forth the tenor of the grace of  
 the gospel, in its teaching us to deny ungodliness  
 and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righte-  
 ously,

ously, and godlily in this world ; Tit. i. 12. SERM.  
and adds, ver. 14. that Christ gave himself X.  
for us for this very end, that he might redeem  
us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a  
peculiar people, zealous of good works. And let  
us add to all these things, that our Lord him-  
self in the course of his ministry assured his  
followers, that he would disown them from  
being his disciples, and that all their preten-  
sions should in the last day stand them in  
no stead, *if they were workers of iniquity,*  
*and did not do the will of God his heavenly*  
*father ;* Mat. vii. 21, 23.

IF therefore we profess to believe, that  
the gospel is the word of God, the tran-  
script of his mind, the message which he  
has sent to us from heaven by the Son of  
his love ; and if in this message we are as-  
sured, that there will be a *revelation of the*  
*righteous judgment of God, wherein he will*  
*render to every one according to his deeds ;* if  
the messenger himself declares with the most  
solemn asseverations, that he will in the last  
day *disown all workers of iniquity ;* if we are  
assured, that the grand design of this divine  
message and negotiation was, to prevail upon  
us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to*  
*live soberly, righteously and godlily in this pre-*  
*sent world,* and that he gave himself to the  
death for us, that he might redeem us from all  
iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar  
people, zealous of good works : then a life of  
ungod-

SERM. ungodliness, unrighteousness, or intemper-

X. ance will be altogether inexcuseable in us ; we shall be treated hereafter as despisers of that awful word of God, which we profess to believe ; and particularly of that word, wherein he offers the most glorious rewards to the practice of what we know becomes us, and denounces the severest punishments against such a course of life as our own consciences condemn. Let us take care, that our *faith* have a better effect upon us : and let us prove that we are *not ashamed of the gospel*, by conforming our lives to the directions of it.





## S E R M O N XI.

A humble disposition necessary to  
the reception of the gospel.

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MAT. xi. 25, 26.

*At that time Jesus answered and said: I thank thee, O father, lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

**T**H E S E words of our Saviour, which are conceived in the form of an address to God, contain a very awful truth, well worthy the consideration of those who entertain the highest opinion of themselves: that the counsel of God, in the dispensation of the gospel, relating to the salvation of mankind, is so contrived, as to be easily understood, and the benefits  
of



SERM. of it sure to be enjoyed, even by persons of

XI. mean capacity, provided they be of a humble disposition, willing to obey the mind of God : but that in its very constitution it is so ordered, that they who think themselves too wise and too good to stand in need of its direction and assistance, shall neither understand it rightly, nor receive any advantage from it. In this thought our Lord manifestly acquiesces, when he says, *Even so, father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight.* But that we might not imagine there was mere arbitrary will and pleasure in the case ; he expresses his thankfulness for it, as the effect of supreme goodness, in conjunction with the supreme wisdom of the great governor of all things : *I thank thee, O father, lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*

IT is my chief design to shew in the ensuing discourse, that this conduct is a proof of supreme wisdom and goodness in the governor of all things. But before I enter upon the proof, it is proper to clear up the meaning of some expressions in the text.

THE text begins with saying, *At that time Jesus answered and said ;* whereas there is nothing immediately preceding, to which the following words can be looked upon as an answer. Now there are in the history  
of

of our Saviour so many other instances to SERM.  
 this purpose, that it is evident; that either XI.  
 the people in those countries did sometimes  
 use the word *answer* in a different sense  
 from that in which we constantly use it;  
 or else that something is understood and  
 supplied in the mind, as the occasion of  
 that which is called an *answer*. And in the  
 case before us it is not at all improbable,  
 that when our Lord had in the words im-  
 mediately before our text, *upbraided the ci-  
 ties wherein most of his mighty works were  
 done, because they repented not*; he might in  
 his own mind put the question to himself,  
 how it came to pass, that men should be so  
 perverse, as not to attend to the instructions  
 he gave, attended, as they were, with such  
 testimonials from heaven. If this be sup-  
 posed; then what he says in the words of  
 the text will properly enough be looked  
 upon as an answer: that is to say; the  
 wise conduct of the Father, in so ordering  
 the gospel constitution, that its doctrines  
 should be embraced, and its benefits en-  
 joyed, only by humble and teachable minds,  
 will sufficiently account for the little success,  
 which Christ's ministry had in *Bethsaida,  
 Chorazin and Capernaum*.

By the things hidden from the wise and  
 prudent, are evidently meant the counsels  
 of God contained in the gospel, relating to  
 mens

S E R M. mens duty and happiness, rejected by these  
 XI. perverse people.

By *babes*, to me it appears, our Lord means persons of humble dispositions, sensible of their want of help, and willing to receive what assistance is offered to them. And from the meaning of the word *babes*, we learn what is meant by the opposite character of *the wise and prudent*. As by *babes* are understood those who are sensible of their want of help; so by *the wise and prudent* must be meant, not those who really are so, how large soever their capacities may be, but who vainly imagine themselves to be wise, and from that vain conceit reject those counsels, which are of high importance to their welfare.

WHAT is rendered in our text, *I thank thee*, is in the original, *I<sup>x</sup> confess unto thee*. Christ made it an ascription of praise and glory to the great governour of all, that he had ordered the constitution of the gospel in such a manner. And this ascription was attended with joyful sentiments of mind. For thus the evangelist *Luke*, in the parallel place, introduces it, chap. x. ver. 21. *In that hour Jesus<sup>y</sup> rejoiced in spirit, and said: I thank*

<sup>x</sup> Ἐξομολογῶμαί σοι, πάτερ, --- ὅτι. κ. τ. λ.

<sup>y</sup> In this parallel text, *Luk. x. 21.* the return of the seventy, whom Christ had sent forth to preach, with the joyful report they made of their success, the pro-



*thank thee, O father, lord of heaven and earth, &c.* SERM. XI.

WHEN our ~~our~~ Lord declares, that the counsels of God are *bidden from the wise and prudent*; he plainly means, that the dispensation thereof is so ordered, that they cannot receive the benefit of them. But then it is evident, that the whole failure arises from their own perverseness, while the gospel is ordered in such a way, that if they attended to it with that disposition of mind which might justly be expected from them, they would receive the greatest advantage by it. And therefore, when our Lord *thanks the Father, for having bidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes*: the thanks are most properly offered up for ordering it so, that the *babes*, the humble and teachable, though mean and slow in their capacity of apprehension, should not fail of understanding the divine counsel, and receiving the promises he makes to them, and the advice he gives them, are plainly a parenthesis, between the same words as those in our text, and the same account of *Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum*, mentioned in ver. 13, 14, 15. And since the matter contained in the text itself, both as recorded by St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, was a just foundation of joyful acknowledgments unto God: the circumstance of the return of the seventy, at the very time when Christ was reproving those who rejected his doctrine, proves no more, than that this was an additional occasion of his *rejoicing in spirit*, when he delivered the words of the text, as recorded by St. *Luke*.

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benefit



S E R M. benefit of it, while the vainly-conceited are

XI. prevented by their own pride and perverseness. The same thing therefore would in our manner of speech stand thus: 'I thank thee, O father, lord of heaven and earth, that while these things are hidden from those who imagine themselves wise and prudent, they are made known to those of meaner abilities, who are humble and teachable in the disposition of their minds.'

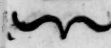
For the expression in our text is much of the same nature with that of St. Paul, Rom. vi. 17. *God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine, which was delivered to you.* In which words it would be very absurd and unjust to imagine, that the apostle thanked God for these mens having been the *servants of sin*: but it is plain, that the thing for which he gave thanks was, that whereas they had formerly been servants of sin, they were now brought to the obedience of the gospel. Thus in our text: whereas the pride and vain conceit of those, who thought themselves too wise to stoop to the institution of the gospel, did by their own fault necessarily prevent them from receiving the benefits of it; Christ thanks the Father that he had so ordered it, that the humble and teachable should enjoy the highest advantages by it.

WE might perhaps go further: and consider Christ as giving glory to the Father as expressly, for so ordering the constitution of the gospel, that it should not be received by proud and perverse dispositions, as that it should be readily embraced by the humble, and become the happy means of their salvation. For the wisdom of God, in conjunction with his justice, is as conspicuous in the one part of this conduct, as with his goodness in the other. And it is certain, that Christ is in scripture said to be *set for the fall, as well as for the rising again of many in Israel*; Luk. ii. 34. And he himself says, *Joh. ix. 39. For judgment I am come into this world; that they who see not might see; and that they who see might be made blind.* But I choose to consider my text in the view first mentioned.

LET us therefore enquire, what foundation for thankfulness there is, or how the wisdom and goodness of the great governor of all things appears, in so ordering the constitution of the gospel, that men of low capacities, with humble, teachable dispositions, should easily understand its design, and securely reap the benefits of it; while men of higher abilities, by reason of their pride and perverseness, stumble at its doctrines, disobey its precepts, and fall short of the benefits it offers.

Now, the foundation for thankfulness is

S E R M. this: that the blessed God has suited the

XI.  gospel dispensation to the necessities of mankind in general, as standing in need of mercy, both for the pardon of sin, and for assisting us in the discharge of our duty, under those infirmities which sin has brought upon us; so that none shall fail of receiving benefit by it, if it be not their own fault, and so as that they who duly attend to it shall certainly be saved by it. This is a just foundation for thankfulness to God, considered as governour of the world, or as it is expressed in our text, *lord of heaven and earth*; a proof of his great wisdom and goodness with regard to the whole race of mankind, as it is suited to the necessities of them all, calculated and designed to do good to all, though such are incapable of receiving benefit by it, who will not own they have any need of it.

THIS is so just an account of the constitution of the gospel, so agreeable to the reception it met with in our Saviour's time, and so perfectly suited to the train of his discourse in the context; that I can make no doubt of its being the very thing, for which he in the words of my text gave thanks to the Father. It was perfectly agreeable to this account which we have given, of Christ's gospel, that he began his ministry with preaching *repentance*; and continued it with preaching the same doctrine;



trine ; recommending the need of it to all, SERM.  
 and declaring to large multitudes, among XI.  
 whom were <sup>2</sup> some who proudly thought   
 they had no need of it, that *unless they re-*  
*pented, they should all likewise perish.* And he  
 mixed with this kind of doctrine exhortations  
 to the several duties required in the course of  
 life, and assurances of the favour of God and  
 the enjoyment of future happiness, to those  
 who should turn from their sins, and in ear-  
 nest apply to the practice of their duty. And  
 he moreover gave as particular an account  
 of his being designed *to give his life a ran-*  
*som for us,* as was fit to be given by him-  
 self in person. The things which were  
 most needful for working good effects up-  
 on the minds of his hearers, and most suited  
 to his circumstances and theirs, he most  
 clearly and largely insisted on : and by the  
 mighty works which he wrought he shew-  
 ed, that he was sent of God on the errand  
 on which he declared he came.

AND what was the reception he met  
 with, in preaching this doctrine, attended  
 with these divine testimonials ? Many of  
 the common people, among whom were  
 some guilty of notorious sins, attended to  
 the voice of their consciences, upon the  
 preaching of repentance ; applied them-  
 selves to the reforming of their lives, ac-  
 cording

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Luk. xiii. 3, 5.* with chap. xi. 37. and  
 xii. 4.



SERM. cording to the directions which Christ gave

XI. them; and enjoyed the comfort of that promise of eternal life, which he had made to those who should obey him. They soon saw their need of mercy, heartily sought it, and did not fail of receiving it. They did not argue themselves out of the blessing which they stood in need of.

BUT it did not thus fare with the *Pharisees*, and others like-minded with them. They had higher degrees of knowledge than the common people: and instead of applying that knowledge to its proper use, the generality of them abused it to their destruction. That knowledge, which should have prepared them for the discharge of their duty, they valued themselves upon, without applying it to practice: nay, they *trusted in themselves as being righteous, and despised others*; when they were so far from practising the substance of their duty, that in many instances they notoriously broke in upon it. They shut their eyes against that light, which shined upon them in the miraculous proofs of Christ's divine mission; despised the authority whereby he called them to repentance; and instead of setting in earnest about that necessary work, put their trust in certain ritual observances, which were instituted with the design of leading them to it. They stood in need of repentance, as certainly as the common people did:

did: and they had the same advantage, of S E R M.  
being called to it by a messenger from hea- XI.  
ven. But their high esteem of themselves  
prevented their owning the need of it, or ac-  
knowledging him in the character wherein  
he appeared to exhort them to it. Thus  
were the salutary counsels of God *hidden*  
*from the wise and prudent*, by their own  
perverseness; while they were in all their  
happy effects *revealed unto babes*; i. e. to  
persons who in comparison of them were  
infants in knowledge, but at the same time  
more humble and ready to receive instruc-  
tion, and more earnest in seeking what they  
stood in need of.

THERE is no need of spending much  
time to shew, that the account I have been  
giving is agreeable to the drift of our Sa-  
viour's discourse, in several verses before our  
text. 'Twas to this purpose that he said,  
ver. 12. *From the days of John the baptist*  
*until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth*  
*violence, and the violent take it by force.*  
And to the same purpose was his *upbraiding*  
*the cities in which most of his mighty*  
*works were done, because they repented not*;  
ver. 20---24. Their not being brought to  
repentance, when they had such advan-  
tages for it, must be owing to their ill-  
grounded and immoderate esteem of them-  
selves, their contempt of the authority with  
which Christ called them to it, and their

SERM. prevailing bias to the things of this world.

XI. They were wise in their own conceit. And yet the wisdom and goodness of God, in suiting the dispensation of the gospel to their real necessities, which they also would have seen and acknowledged, if they had not been altogether perverse, and set upon other pursuits, was nevertheless a just ground and foundation for that *thankfulness*, which our Lord expressed in the text.

AND now let us see, how the account I have given of my text agrees to the state of the gospel among us at this day.

THE necessity of repentance is still by the gospel preached to all: and we, who have so large a collection of our Lord's instructions conveyed down to us in writing, have that advantage, in this respect, which perhaps no one among all the places where Christ preached in person ever did enjoy. Indeed these instructions are conveyed to us in that way, in which Christ himself delivered them; which was in several parts, and upon a variety of occasions; but are not composed into one methodical scheme. We have moreover a much fuller account of the doctrine of Christ's being a propitiation for our sins, than was fit to be given by Christ himself in his own person, before he was made a sacrifice. And as for the certainty of his divine mission; we have not only the con-

curring.



curreing accounts of the mighty works he performed, from the same evangelists, upon whose credit we receive his doctrine itself; but likewise concurring accounts of his being raised from the dead, after he had, by the malice of his enemies, been put to death; and an undeniable testimony of the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon his followers after his ascension into heaven. SERM. XI.

BUT what is the reception this gospel meets with? Why, much the same as it met with in our Saviour's time, and in that of the apostles, his immediate followers. As to which St. Paul thus appealed to the *Corinthians*, 1 Ep. i. 26---29. *Ye see your calling, brethren: how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.*

THESE words are much of the same import as the expressions in our text, of *hiding the divine counsels from the wise and prudent, and revealing them to babes.* There is no necessity of understanding the apostle to speak of an arbitrary choice or calling of men



SERM. men of low degree and mean capacity to

XI. the benefits of the gospel, and arbitrarily passing by others. It is much more reasonable to suppose, the *choice* and *calling* of which he speaks to be understood of mens own voluntary embracing the gospel, and being in consequence thereof chosen to receive the benefits of it. And as the gospel of Christ continues the same that it was; it is no wonder, that the same temper of mind, which disposed men to embrace it then, should have the same effect now. They who are now made acquainted with the substance of the gospel, who consider the tendency of it, and upon comparing it with their own sinfulness and want of assistance under their infirmities, find it suited to their condition; they gladly embrace it, and receive the benefit of it. Of what rank and degree in life these generally are, I need not say. I wish there were more of the *wise*, and the *mighty*, and the *noble*, than there are; at the same time that I rejoice to see so many. This is certain; that their *wisdom*, and their being *mighty*, and *noble*, are no reasonable hindrances to their hearty embracing the gospel. And as these cannot be reasonable hindrances; so neither are they necessary: for though there were not many of these characters, who did embrace it of old, yet there were some: and the same thing

is true at this day. And we read, *Acts* vi. 7. that a great company, even of the priests themselves, were obedient to the faith; which, considering their prejudices in favour of the religion they taught, is perhaps as great a wonder, as if the like number of men of the highest rank in life, had done it.

SERM.

XI.

THE gospel is not so contrived, as to be fitted only to mean understandings or a mean condition. 'Tis by no means unworthy of the finest genius, or the highest rank in life. There are interwoven in the scheme of it thoughts of so sublime a nature, as will give a sufficient exercise to the strongest genius: and the importance of it is such, even to persons of the highest character, that when once it is made known to them, they cannot reject it but at the peril of their own salvation. But then it is so contrived, that persons of a very mean capacity may take in the most important design of it; and at the same time so ordered, that a humble disposition of mind is necessary in order to receive the benefits of it. Wherever there is the want of this disposition, whether it is in persons of high or low degree; the gospel of Christ cannot be received, but must of course be rejected. The frame and constitution of it require such a disposition in those who embrace it. 'Tis suited to no other than those who are thus disposed: nor can it be re-  
lished

SERM. lished or countenanced by any other. No

XI. great wonder therefore that it is rejected  
 by those, who think themselves able without its help to frame regular schemes of morality, and to put them in execution; and who entertain such slight notions of the evil of sin, as to affirm that there was no occasion for any methods of propitiation, to vindicate the authority of the violated laws of the supreme governour: and no great wonder, that the nearer professed christians approach to such schemes, the less zeal they shew for any thing peculiar to christianity. I shall take up the remaining part of this discourse in reasoning a little upon these two topics, and endeavouring to remove the objections, which some have thence raised against the christian doctrine.

I OBSERVED, that some persons decline the embracing of christianity, from the thought that they themselves are able to frame a regular methodical scheme of morals, and to put it in execution in the course of life, without any help from the gospel.

Now I would, in the first place, desire all such persons to consider, whether their pretensions are just, in the scheme of morals they frame to themselves. Can they pretend, that they are not obliged to the books of the new testament for some of the best things in their own moral scheme? To me it is highly probable, that they are  
 thus



thus indebted, notwithstanding that there SERM.  
are many excellent things in the writings XI.  
of antient heathens; and notwithstanding  
that Christ did not go about to deliver a  
large and methodical scheme of moral duties.  
Nay, it is more than probable; it is in-  
deed abundantly evident; that none of the  
moralists among the heathens before our Savi-  
our's time, gave such exact and methodical,  
and at the same time so full and compre-  
hensive schemes of morality, if we may  
judge by their works now extant, as those  
who have lived since our Saviour's days:  
and further, that the more comprehensive  
any schemes of morality are, which are  
the produce of modern times, the more  
they are like to what we find scattered  
up and down the new testament. There-  
fore how judiciously soever they collect a  
scheme of morality, they are very much  
indebted to the gospel for it: which evi-  
dently lays a better foundation for a per-  
fect moral scheme, than all the other writ-  
ings in the world.

BUT further, I affirm: that there was  
no need of our Lord's delivering to men  
a regular scheme of morality in one con-  
nexion: and moreover, that the method  
taken by him, of recommending particular  
duties at different times, and upon different  
occasions, and taking different opportuni-  
ties to enforce them, and intermixing with  
the



SERM. the precepts and their enforcements the

XI. testimonials of his divine mission, was calculated to answer a much more beneficial end with the bulk of mankind, than delivering one set form of moral precepts, though ever so regularly connected. If some few can take in a strict course of reasoning upon moral obligations, and carry on the train of it to a great length; yet we all know, that the generality of mankind cannot do it. The manner therefore, in which the gospel delivers these things, is wisely contrived to be useful to the greatest part; and yet so ordered, that the most knowing and the wisest men in the world may receive great advantage by it. The familiar method, in which moral instructions are delivered in the gospel, is undoubtedly of greatest use to the bulk of mankind, because it is levelled to all capacities. And if there were nothing more than this to be said of it, it ought to be highly esteemed even by the wisest. But are there any so wise, as not to find it of importance to be reminded of their duty themselves, and reminded in such a way as is done in the gospel? Are their own schemes so constantly present to their minds, as that they never forget what is their proper duty upon an emergent occasion? And will their abstracted reasonings upon a moral obligation always stand them in stead  
against

against a temptation to violate their duty, SERM.  
as effectually as the assurance by a messenger XI.

shall be hereafter rewarded, and obstinate impenitency severely punished? May it not be of unspeakable advantage, even to the readiest reasoners in morality, to have a perfect collection of morals always ready at hand to consult; and those morals illustrated by the most spotless example, and enforced by the strongest motives, in the person of one, who proved, by a concurrence of external evidence, that he was sent of God? It may certainly be of great advantage, even to the readiest reasoners; and therefore ought by them to be gladly embraced: and much more should they acknowledge, that it is of high importance to the bulk of mankind, who cannot reason so readily, and who have innumerable avocations in their course of life. But there is no possibility of profiting by all the helps which the gospel provides, without a humble disposition of mind in attending to them.

THE other objection against the christian religion is; that though it does indeed promise the pardon of sin to the truly penitent; yet it signifies, that this pardon is conveyed to us through the mediation of Christ, and particularly by means of his death; that though the new testament

S E R M. ment represents us as justified freely by the  
 XI. *grace of God, yet it is through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, who is set forth as the propitiatory through faith in his blood; Rom. iii. 24, 25. that he is said to have died for us; and we to be justified by his blood, and saved from wrath through him; Rom. v. 8, 9. and, passing by many other expressions of like import, Christ is affirmed to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; 1 Joh. ii. 2.*

T H E R E is no one thing in the whole christian doctrine, which has been so much objected against as this. We find, that in the apostles days a *crucified Christ was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. 1 Cor. i. 18, 23.* Neither the one nor the other could believe, that there was any wisdom in conveying pardon and salvation to sinful men through the death of a mediator. And yet since this was the way, in which the all-wise God thought fit to convey these blessings, they ought to have acquiesced; and so ought we. As to ourselves; there is nothing more required of us, than that, believing in Christ, we do in earnest repent of our sins, and turn from them. And can we be in earnest in our repentance, and yet find fault with the method, in which our offended governour chooses to convey his pardon? Shall we quarrel with him,



him, for taking further measures to vindicate the honour of his violated laws, besides insisting upon our repentance? Can we by our repentance claim a pardon at his hands, as of right due to it? Or could the meer light of nature give us an absolute assurance, that if we did repent, we should certainly be forgiven? Are we very sure, that it was unbecoming the wisdom, and other perfections of the divine being, *to condemn sin in the flesh, by means of a sin-offering*, in the same nature which had offended? Was there no wisdom in shewing an irreconcilable aversion to sin, in the same transaction which discovers a merciful propension to the sinner? If we are not absolutely and infallibly certain, that these things are inconsistent with the divine perfections: then the account which the new testament gives us of the method of pardon through the blood of Christ, being conveyed to us upon the same credit and authority, as his excellent moral doctrine, his spotless life, his mighty works, his resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon his followers, should, one would think, be treated by sober men with some tolerable respect, even though it be a doctrine, which without revelation would never have entered into our thoughts. And is it not much more reasonable to suppose, that

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those

S E R M.

XI.



SERM. those things may possibly be the dictates of

XI.  divine wisdom, the reason whereof we do not immediately discover, than rashly to condemn them at once, and reject along with them that whole doctrine to which they relate, notwithstanding the many evidences of its divine original? If we cannot see the reason of the divine procedure in this case; yet the goodness and perfection of the christian morals, the suitableness of their enforcement to the condition of sinful men, the spotless example of the preacher's life, and the divine testimonials given to him from heaven, should keep us from the presumption of rashly rejecting that religion in the gross, and should dispose us to enquire of our own hearts, whether we do not ourselves stand in need of that very mercy which it offers to us, both for the forgiveness of our sins, and for encouraging and assisting us in the course of our duty. When once we are come to this temper of mind, we are *not far from the kingdom of God*. And our Saviour has assured us, *Mat. xviii. 3, 4.* that we must have *the humility of babes*, before we can *enter into that kingdom*.



## S E R M O N XII.

The abuse of revelation no disproof  
of its real worth.

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R O M. iii. 1---4.

*What advantage then hath the Jew ;  
or what profit is there in circum-  
cision ? Much every way : chiefly  
because unto them were committed  
the oracles of God. For what if  
some did not believe ? Shall their  
unbelief make the faith of God  
without effect ? God forbid.*

**T**H E S E words, as they stand con-  
nected with the preceding part of  
the epistle, are a full answer to such ob-  
jections, as are at this day raised against re-  
vealed religion in general. While they who  
shew respect to revelation represent it as a  
desireable blessing, considering the condi-  
tion of those to whom it is given ; its ad-

S E R M. versaries object, that revelation itself proves

XII. ineffectual to the purposes of religion, in  
 ~~~~~ great numbers of those to whom it is supposed to be made known, as well as reason and the light of nature had proved ineffectual before; and that therefore, notwithstanding any imagined benefit of revelation, mankind are but just where they were before it was granted. It is very much to this purpose, that the objection is raised in our text. *If he only is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter,* (as the apostle had shewn in the preceding chapter that the case really was) then *what advantage was it to be a Jew*; when even the *Jews* themselves disbelieved and disobeyed those divine oracles which were delivered to them? This objection the apostle himself raised, on purpose that he might furnish those to whom he wrote with a full answer to it, whenever it should arise in their own minds, or be started by some adversary to the christian religion, to which the *Jewish* oeconomy had a constant view. And his answer consists chiefly in these two things: that it was a real advantage to men, considered in a state of corruption, to have a divine revelation to instruct them in their duty, and excite them to the practice of it: and that this continued to be of a beneficial tendency to the purposes of religion, how  
 much

much soever some men might, by their perverse abuses or non-improvement, render it unprofitable to themselves ; its becoming ineffectual to those, who through their own fault rejected it, being no proof of its insufficiency to answer the best of purposes.

SERM.
XII.
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To confirm you therefore in your good esteem of revelation, I shall make these two arguments the subject of my following discourse.

I. THAT it is a real *advantage* to a people, *to have the oracles of God committed to them* ; and a thing most highly desirable, wherever there has been any departure from the law of nature.

II. THAT mens abusing or not improving the divine oracles, is no disproof of their being a real benefit.

I. THAT it is a real *advantage* to a people, *to have the oracles of God committed to them* ; and a thing most highly desirable, wherever there has been any departure from the law of nature.

'TIS mens departure from the law of nature, which makes a revelation of the mind of God needful to set them right. That reason, with which God endued men, has been perverted to purposes contrary to those for which it was given. It was given to enable and excite them to love and honour their creator and governour and benefactor, and to do good to his creatures,



SERM. and in the course of such a practice to se-

XII. cure a rational happiness to themselves. But

it soon came to be employed quite another way. I will not now enquire what influence the sin of the first man might have upon his posterity. Nor is it needful in the present case; since whatever he did, his posterity could not have been sinners without their own choice. However, both sacred and profane history concur to prove, that there was in the early days of the world a general depravity, a general departure of mankind from the law of their nature, partly in their rejecting the worship of the one living and true God, and setting up a multiplicity of objects of worship; and partly in immoralities towards each other, And 'tis too plain a point to need a proof; that customs of sinning, observed in others, not only are a great snare to such as are themselves well inclined; but have, in the persons accustomed to sin, the most unhappy tendency to blind the understanding, as well as to harden the heart.

Now when this is the state of the case; any revelation of the mind of God, whether tending to excite men by proper motives to the practice of their duty, or employed only in putting them in mind of it, must be of great advantage to the purposes of religion: and consequently if it be both ways employed, it must be doubly useful. I shall

I shall not need to enter into a long account SERM.  
of the several revelations which God has XII.  
been pleased to grant unto men ; every one ~  
of which was suited to the condition of  
those to whom it was granted. 'Tis suffi-  
cient to consider the case in our text : where  
the apostle mentions the revelation made to  
the *Jews*, and leaves us to observe the great  
superiority of the gospel institution above it,  
for all the purposes of a revelation.

THOUGH no man can profit by any re-  
ligion if he will not attend to it, and com-  
ply with the visible design of it ; yet the  
apostle observes, that there was an *advantage*  
to the *Jew* above the heathen, and a *pro-*  
*fit in circumcision* ; and that it consisted  
*chiefly* in this, that *to them were committed*  
*the oracles of God*. And if you look into  
the old testament, and see what those *oracles*  
were, and what the condition of the people  
to whom they were *committed* ; you will  
soon see he was right in his assertion. What-  
ever promises had been made to *Abraham*,  
the father of this people, which they might  
hope would be fulfilled ; yet they did not  
as a people receive the *law*, nor was indeed  
the dispensation which goes by that name  
settled, till after they had been in an idola-  
trous country, and had made a happy escape  
out of it. Delivered, as they were, from  
*Egyptian* idolatry and *Egyptian* slavery at  
the same time, yet they had a strong incli-  
nation

S E R M. nation to return to the one as well as to the  
 XII. other. *They wanted a guide to lead them back*

~~~~~  
 to Egypt, even while *Moses* their governour was gone into the mount, *to receive the lively oracles for them* : and though they had seen the mighty interposition of providence, which rescued them from bondage, and the many proofs of a *living and true God*, concerning himself for their deliverance while they were in *Egypt* ; yet they were so prone to *Egyptian* idolatry, as to set up the image of an *ox* or *calf*, the very idol worshiped by the *Egyptians*, and to proclaim before it, *These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of Egypt*. Now the same God, who saw their proneness to this particular evil of idolatry, saw likewise their inclination to other evils, and guarded against them by suitable precepts ; besides taking care of the grand view of all the dispensations since the fall ; which was to keep up in pious minds the expectation of a deliverance from sin and its miserable effects, by some extraordinary means to be provided in future time.

Ex. xxxii.
 4, 8.

BUT the one evil, which was most particularly guarded against, was that of which this people was most in danger ; the falling in with the idolatry of the nations round about them. To secure them against this pernicious evil, as well as to answer the great end of keeping up the hopes of the
 promised

promised *Messiah*, who was to spring from SERM.
this people, and be a blessing to them and XII.
to the whole world; to both these ends, I
say, manifestly tended the renewal of the
practice of circumcision, and of the cove-
nant relating to it; whereby this people
was kept separate from all other nations.
To the same ends tended their sacrifices and
rites of purification: whereby they were
taught that, whereas the most holy God
vouchsafed after a special manner to be their
king, they were unworthy and unfit to be
admitted to his presence, whenever by the
breach of his laws they defiled themselves,
till they submitted to such measures as he
appointed for their restoration. Indeed (as
was before observed) there was in the body
of their laws, and particularly in the deca-
logue, such a provision made against im-
morality in general, as would have secured
a good moral conduct, if they had regard-
ed it as they ought. But it is visible,
that a considerable part, even of the
ten commandments themselves, was calcu-
lated to guard this people against idolatry,
and to teach them the acknowledgment of
the one living and true God, the maker of
heaven and earth, and their gracious deli-
verer, as the sole object of worship. This
being the grand evil they wanted to be
guarded against, was most especially taken
care of, both in their laws themselves, and
in

SERM. in the ministry of the prophets. But besides this, we see, that by the many precepts concerning relative duties, and moreover by the frequent messages of the prophets, care was taken to instil proper sentiments of their duty towards God and towards each other; and particularly to defend them against the danger of resting in the external performance of those very services, which were enjoined to them as tokens of their being God's peculiar people.

AND NOW, notwithstanding the burden which these services brought upon this people; consider their condition, as newly escaped from one idolatrous nation, and going to possess a country, where they should be encompassed wholly with idolatrous neighbours; consider them, as directed by good moral precepts in their conduct towards each other, and occasionally called upon by the ministry of the prophets, sent from time to time, to give such advices as the state of their case required; and lastly, consider them as the people whom God certified by a variety of methods, that from them the *Messiah* should arise, by whom the best of blessings should, in due time, be conveyed to them, and to all his faithful servants in all nations of the world: and then ask yourselves, whether the revelation given to this people was an *advantage* or not?

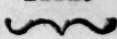
WAS it not a considerable *advantage*, to have

have the oracles of God committed to them, SERM. XII.

while other nations went on in the blindness, which from generation to generation they brought upon themselves? Was it not an *advantage*, to have these oracles in their own hands, to consult for their guidance? Would not these suggest many useful thoughts, which they might want to be put in mind of? Was there not a great *advantage* in the precepts and promises, and even in the threatnings too? And was there not abundant reason given them to believe, that all the precepts of their law, and all the motives set before them to produce obedience to it, did really come from God; that wise, powerful and gracious being, who had concerned himself in their favour, and wrought their deliverance from bondage? Was there not sufficient evidence given of a divine power attending *Moses*, in the many miracles he wrought before the departure of the *Israelites* from *Egypt*? Could the deliverance at the *Red-Sea* be ascribed to any thing short of a divine power? Was not their support in the wilderness miraculous? And were not the circumstances, which attended the delivery of the law, such as shewed it was the mind and counsel of that same wise and gracious being, who had done all these mighty works in their favour? And lastly, under all the imperfection of the measures appointed by that law

SERM. law for the expiation of sin; was there not
 XII. sufficient provision made for comforting the
 minds of all the truly pious among this people, with the good hope of an effectual method to be provided by the goodness of God in time to come?

Now if the *Israelites* had reason to believe, that the law, delivered to them by the hand of *Moses*, was the mind of *the one living and true God*, the creator and governor of the world; if the moral part did, by its own intrinsic goodness, prove itself to be worthy of him, and fit for them to obey; if the positive institutions themselves were such, as plainly appeared to be appointed of God, and had in their own nature no evil in them; and if their very imperfection, as to the purposes of atonement and real purification, compared with the promise of the best of blessings to be obtained in some future time, served to keep up in their minds *repentance from dead works, and faith towards God*: then this oeconomy of the law, weak and imperfect as it was, in comparison of the gospel, was an unspeakable *advantage* to the people to whom it was delivered. It gave them, I say, an unspeakable *advantage* above the *Gentiles*, notwithstanding that the *Gentiles* had still the use of their natural faculties of reason, which they might and ought to have employed in a better manner than they did.

IT would be somewhat strange, in a SERM.
christian nation, to hear these plain things XII.
thus insisted on, were it not that the spirit 
of infidelity has prevailed upon such multi-
tudes to suppose, or at least, to pretend;
that there is no advantage in divine revela-
tion; and to give this reason for it, that
men may find out, by the exercise of their
own natural faculties, what is fit for them
to do, and what to avoid. It is proper to
set now and then such thoughts before you,
that you may see the weakness of the ar-
gument brought against the usefulness of
revelation. For though it is true, that men
might, by the right exercise of their rational
faculties, know the substance of their duty
towards God and each other, and practise
what they know: yet if it be likewise true,
that men in general have not attended to
the voice of their reason and judgment, but
have acted contrary to it, and thereby in a
great measure blinded their understandings,
as well as corrupted their affections; then
it is certain, that any method, suited to their
rational frame and liberty of choice, which
will put them in mind of their duty, and
set before them proper motives to at-
tend to it, must needs be a great benefit to
them. And this is the very work and bu-
siness of revelation: which through the
universal depravity of mankind was become
highly desirable to all, and ought therefore
most

SERM. most thankfully to be received by all those
 XII. to whom it is granted.

~~~~~ I DO not proceed so far as to affirm, that revelation was absolutely necessary ; or that there was no possibility of answering the purposes of religion without it. I have indeed just now affirmed the direct contrary ; and acknowledged, that if men would attend diligently to the voice of natural conscience, they would not be such strangers to religion, as the bulk of mankind generally are. And without acknowledging this, I cannot see how to account for the equity of God's conduct, as governor and judge of the world, with regard to those nations, to which he has not granted the benefit of revelation. If he will hereafter condemn their idolatries and immoralities, as we have good reason to believe he will ; the foundation of this judgment must be, because they had that light within them, which would have guided them better, if they had attended to it. This one argument is sufficient to justify the divine conduct : and this is what the apostle affirms to be the case, *Rom. ii. 14, 15.* that *when the Gentiles, who have not a written law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves ; who shew the work of the law written in their hearts ; their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts within them-*

themselves accusing or else excusing them. And SERM.  
very fully to the same purpose the apostle XII.

Peter assures us, *Acts* x. 35. that in every nation be that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him : words which plainly intimate the hope, that notwithstanding the general corruption of mankind, there may be some in every nation, who fear God and work righteousness, and who consequently are accepted of him, though they have not the benefit of a revelation.

BUT these considerations, which are necessary for vindicating the divine conduct with regard to the heathen nations, are perfectly consistent with thankful acknowledgments of the great advantage of revelation, considering the miserable condition, into which mankind in general was brought by sin. And accordingly those words of the apostle to the *Romans*, ii. 14, 15. are part of the same thread of discourse with the words of our text, where he expressly declares, that the *Jews had every way the advantage* over the Gentiles ; and chiefly in this, that to them were committed the oracles of God.

LET therefore the enemies of revelation affirm ever so strongly the sufficiency of reason to the purposes of religion : yet it is certain, that it could not answer those purposes when it was not attended to : and as certain, that hereby revelation became so highly desirable ; that it might call men  
to

SERM. to the due exercise of their reason, and

XII. moreover suggest to them such encouragements in the practice of religion, as the mere exercise of their natural powers could not have assured them of. And agreeably hereto we find; that many of the ancient heathens, sufficiently able by the reflexions of their reason to discover their weakness, and to condemn the ill customs and practices into which they had fallen, expressed at once, their earnest wishes for a revelation, and their hopes, from the abundant goodness which they believed to be in the governour of the world, that he would be pleased to pity his creatures, and grant it to them.

BUT there is another objection still behind, grounded upon the answer given to this first. And it is to this purpose: if mens not attending to the light of nature is the reason of its becoming ineffectual to the purposes of religion; then the same objection lies against revelation itself: for if men do not attend to revelation when it is given them, it can no more answer beneficial purposes than reason alone; and hence it is inferred, that under the supposed benefits of revelation, men are but just where they were before.

THIS objection seems very plausible at first sight: but there is nothing in it, when you come to consider it closely. I proceed therefore to observe

II. THAT



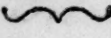
II. THAT mens abusing or not improving the *divine oracles* is no disproof of their being a real benefit. SERM. XII.

THE objection is fully answered if you consider ; that though we must attend to the voice of revelation if we would hope to profit by it, yet it is fitted to promote the purposes of religion in such circumstances, where unassisted reason, in the corrupt state of mankind, is likely to be of little service.

WITH all the kind helps which revelation affords, it is still suited to that freedom of choice, whereby we are constituted rational beings. Revelation was not given to make men religious whether they would or no : for indeed that is a thing impossible in itself. Religion must always be a work of choice and free consent. But revelation was designed and fitted to assist men to choose and follow after the best things, when by sinful prejudices they were under a bias to the contrary side. And the advantage of revelation, in answer to the present objection, will most clearly appear, if you consider men in a state of corruption and weakness ; and then put the question, whether in that corrupted and infirm state, reason is as able to answer the purposes of religion without revelation as with it. This is the true state of the case. And here, if there be any truth in what has been advanced



S E R M. under the preceding head, it is evident ; that

XII.  let men, in that state into which sin has brought them, attend ever so diligently to the voice of reason within them, their reason, unassisted with revelation, can never answer the purposes of religion so effectually, as with the assistance of it. Supposing, I say, the same degree of attention in both cases ; it is impossible, that reason, unassisted with revelation, should answer as well the purposes of religion, to men in a corrupted state, as when it has revelation to assist it. If there were nothing more to be considered, than the uncertainty of unassisted reason, when under a sense of sin against a being perfectly pure and righteous, perfectly wise, and unspeakably powerful ; yet this alone were enough to shew, that revelation must be of great advantage. 'Tis impossible, that men in such a case should go on with so much chearfulness, by the mere reflexions of their own minds, or by the mere power of such reflexions resist so vigorously future temptations to sin, as if they were assured by a revelation from heaven, that they should be pardoned upon sincere repentance and submission to God's appointments. The like arguments might be raised from other topics ; particularly from the views of a future state of rewards to the persevering faithful. And in general with regard to  
the

the practice of moral duties, and the acceptable worship of God; they who have been defective, or are by ill customs become very irregular, cannot possibly proceed in the course of their duty with so much comfort to themselves, or be of so much advantage to their neighbours, without the benefit of revelation to direct them, as with it.

YOU see I am stating the case so, as to require only an equal degree of attendance to revelation, in that condition of mankind which alone rendered it needful, as to unassisted reason in the same condition. And I will leave it to any man to judge; whether if there were two men of equal abilities, and equally good dispositions, the one in a country which had not the benefit of a divine revelation, and the other in a place which enjoyed it, the man who had revelation to guide and encourage him, would not have vastly the *advantage* of the other. If he would; then other mens abuse of a revelation is no disproof of its being a real benefit. It is a benefit suited to that unhappy condition, into which sin had brought us: and therefore gives great advantages for the purposes of religion; though after all it can never be effectual, if men will not attend to it.

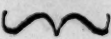
AND indeed, if mens not attending to a thing could prove that the thing itself had

SERM. no beneficial tendency ; then it would fol-

XII. low, that even reason itself never was capable of answering the purposes of religion at all : for 'tis certain, that if men will not consult and exercise their reason, they cannot perform one action that deserves the name of religion. This one argument is sufficient to shew, that mens disregard of or want of attention to revelation, is no proof of its insufficiency to answer the purpose for which it was designed.

Thus I have proved, that considering the circumstances we are in, revelation is of very great advantage to the purposes of religion ; and yet that our receiving of this advantage depends upon our attention to it, as it is fit it should. I shall now conclude, with exhorting you to attend diligently to that dispensation of the mind of God, with which you are favoured ; and to obey its dictates with the greater thankfulness, as it affords so much greater advantages, and encouragements in a religious course, than that dispensation, of which the apostle speaks of in our text ; which was given to one particular people, and designed to prepare the way for the gospel constitution, which is calculated to extend its salutary influences to all nations of the world.

SINCE the dispensation of the law itself, attended as it was with a vast number of burdensome ceremonies, with severe threatenings

nings to the disobedient, and with little S E R M.  
 of those encouraging views of heavenly feli- XII.  
 city which the gospel affords, did yet give   
*to the Jew every way the advantage above*  
*the heathen*: then it is certain, that our ad-  
 vantage under the gospel is still greater.  
 For in the dispensation of the gospel, our  
 moral duty itself is more clearly and more  
 copiously set forth, than it was to the *Jews*  
 under the law: we have the advantage of  
 a more universally perfect example, in the  
 person of Christ our lawgiver, than their  
 whole dispensation afforded: moreover, the  
 gospel is *established upon better promises*; and  
 the proper motives to work upon us are set  
 in a stronger light: and besides all this, it  
 is attended with a less burden of ceremo-  
 nial observances; and plain reasons are sug-  
 gested for those few which are instituted,  
 which was not done under the law. We  
 have therefore, in many respects, the *advan-*  
*tage* above those, who *had every way the*  
*advantage* over the heathens: and conse-  
 quently it must be of great importance  
 to our present and future happiness, to at-  
 tend diligently to those instructions, which  
 the gospel affords to us, and to comply with  
 its requirements.

IT must be of great importance to our  
 present happiness, if it makes the best pro-  
 vision for our present peace, and if the re-  
 jection of it is likely to lie heavy upon the



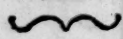
SERM. conscience. And after the brief account  
 XII. which you have just now heard of the gospel dispensation, I will appeal to yourselves, whether this is not the case. If in the present state we are exposed to many evils which endanger our virtue; if the following any course which is evil in itself will necessarily make us miserable; and if the gospel sets before us the most powerful means for enabling us to avoid that misery, and the strongest encouragements to the practice of that holiness which will surely be rewarded with everlasting felicity; and if it hereby shews, that it is calculated to establish peace upon the best foundations: then by rejecting it we lay the deepest foundation for remorse in our minds.

I AM speaking of those, who have the opportunity of being well acquainted with the gospel; and more especially of those who profess to have considered and examined its pretensions. I say, how such persons can be content to reject the gospel of Christ; how they can rest satisfied with schemes of their own, in contempt of that provision which is made by express direction from heaven, for encouraging a sinner's return to his duty, and persevering in it, for supporting us under trouble, and preparing us in the disposition of our minds, for that everlasting happiness which it sets before us; I am not able to see. Do their own schemes really give them a better ground for proceeding

ceeding in a course of piety towards God, and of righteousness and beneficence towards men, than the gospel affords? Do their own deductions from reason, exclusive of revelation, afford them a more firm satisfaction of acceptance with that God, *who hates iniquity with a perfect hatred*? Or has the mere consideration of the fitness of things, and the unchangeable nature of moral obligations, always its proper effect upon them, so that they stand in no need of mercy? Are they above the views of a heavenly reward to their virtue? Or if they are not; could they have been as sure of such a reward by the deductions of their reason, if they had never known any thing of the gospel, as they are now by the help of it? If they are indebted to the gospel for their firm belief of a future state; let them remember, that they did not learn it there by mere reasoning, but from the assurance which the Son of God gave of it, by the evidence of his divine mission; and that it is upon the same evidence of divine authority, that the whole of his religion comes recommended to us.

BUT farther, I would intreat those, who profess to have studied impartially the christian doctrine to observe; that the one great design, which it most evidently aims at, is the restoring and establishing a regard to those internal good things, in which the essence of religion is on all hands acknowledged

SERM. ledged to consist. And it is no way credi-

XII.  ble, that any person should appear in such circumstances as the publisher of that doctrine appeared in ; that he should, in a course of some years ministry, distinguish himself by delivering so holy a doctrine ; that he should constantly conform himself to it, without any variation, in the course of his own life ; that he should in the name of God perform the numerous mighty works, to which he appealed as proofs of his divine mission ; that he should do all this under much reproch and persecution ; that expecting to suffer death for persisting in this course, he should foretel that he should rise again unto life on the third day ; that this prediction should be fulfilled ; and that miraculous powers should shortly after his disappearing be publicly conferred upon his disciples, and them only : it is, I say, no way credible ; it is indeed absolutely impossible, that all these things should concur with regard to the doctrine and person of Christ, and yet he be an impostor, while he declared the divine authority of that doctrine, and the importance of receiving and rejecting it. Where all these things concur, there cannot but be the voice of God, calling upon us to attend to this doctrine, and signifying that it is of the highest moment to our happiness.

I DESIRE you to remember, that I am  
speaking

speaking of christianity as it lies in the new S E R M.  
testament. If any persons have given out XII.  
a corrupt doctrine under this venerable  
name ; or if they who profess to be the  
followers of it, have acted contrary to it ;  
neither the one nor the other of these things  
will be any excuse for our rejecting the chri-  
stian religion itself. They must be answer-  
able for themselves, who have corrupted  
christianity, or under the profession of it  
have acted contrary to its design. But the  
question is, how we ourselves can refuse  
submitting to what has such plain indica-  
tions of being the mind of God relating to  
us, and yet rest satisfied in our own minds  
at present, and run no risque of his dis-  
pleasure, when we come to give up our  
accounts to him at the last day.

IF notwithstanding what may possibly  
be known by the light of nature, the gos-  
pel affords such a knowledge of our duty,  
and such excitements to the practice of it,  
as may be very useful even to the wisest  
man in the world ; and if it makes provi-  
sion for encouraging the return of the worst  
of sinners to his duty, and yet in such a  
way, as a person of the best education and  
the most free from stains need not be a-  
shamed of, but may with the highest rea-  
son most thankfully embrace : then they  
had need be very positive of the all-suffici-  
ency of their own deductions, who will  
venture



SERM. venture to affirm, that there was no occasion for Christ's coming, or that there is  
 XII. no need of attending to him now he is come. After the evidence which his doctrine has of proceeding from God, it is surely much safer for us to submit to his wisdom and righteousness therein displayed, and to be thankful for his goodness, than proudly to reject his counsel. 'Tis wisdom to be willing to be saved and made happy, in that way which God has graciously appointed for it. 'Tis wisdom to own that want, and that weakness, which upon serious consideration we must find to be in ourselves; and joyfully to comply with those directions, which God in his great goodness has afforded for our assistance.

If indeed there is no reason to believe that the gospel comes from God; if the thoughts it suggests concerning a divine being and our relation to him, the duties it enjoins, and the motives upon which it proceeds, are altogether unworthy of God, and unsuitable to our condition; if the general tendency of the doctrine is such as would be pernicious to the interest of our souls; if it has neither internal evidence of its real goodness and fitness for our condition, nor external evidence of its being a revelation from heaven: then it is not only safe for us to reject it, but likewise our interest and our duty to cast it away from us.

The

The great judge of all knows perfectly well, S E R M.  
whether they who reject the gospel do really XII.  
believe that this is its true character ; or

whether they are offended at the strict holiness of its precepts ; or whether it is the pride of their hearts, which keeps them from submitting to the method which it appoints for their justification. The great judge of all knows perfectly well what is the real occasion : and to him the judgment ought to be left. But let us for our own parts take care, that we do not suffer any unreasonable prejudice to prevail upon us ; lest at length it should blind our eyes, and make us indifferent in an affair of the highest moment.

FOR if the contrary to all the formentioned suppositions should be true ; if the gospel doctrine, in all its parts, in its speculations, in its precepts and its motives, is really worthy of God, and suited to our condition, as sinful men, and such as stand in need of help ; if it tends to make us pure and holy, in order to our being finally happy ; and if besides this internal evidence of proceeding from God, it has been attended with such external evidence, as is in all reason sufficient to prove its divine authority : then we cannot with safety reject it ; and a difficulty arising from some circumstances relating to it should never make us doubt about embracing and adhering to it.

LET

SERM. LET us comply with it so far as we un-

XII. derstand it: and then, if there should remain  
 some few difficulties in our minds with relation to it, they will do us no harm. And if, when there is great strength of argument set before us, we will refuse to do what appears most fit for us, till every little objection is removed; we shall never take any one wise resolution as long as we live.

BUT there is a further use to be made of this subject, with a special regard to those, who have taken upon them the profession of christianity. Such persons do, by their profession of it, declare that they believe the gospel affords a great advantage to the purposes of religion. It is therefore of the highest moment to them, that they improve that *advantage*, which they acknowledge they enjoy. What excuse can they make for themselves, if while they enjoy great advantages towards settling a holy and godlike disposition, and leading a life of piety, righteousness and beneficence, they be found altogether unlike to God, alienated from him, unaffected with his goodness, void of reverence to his heavenly majesty, injurious to his creatures and subjects, destitute of any care or concern to conform to his command or example? What excuse, I say, can such persons frame for themselves; when by their very profession of christianity they acknowledge they enjoy by it great  
 advan.

advantages for encreasing in every thing that S E R M.  
is good ? The example of many heathens XII.  
will rise up in judgment against such persons for their condemnation. For not only  
the scripture supposes it a probable case, that  
*in every nation* there may be some, who *fear*  
*God, and work righteousness* ; but it is certain,  
there are examples of men, in such nations  
as were not blessed with a divine revelation,  
who have given proofs hereof in the course  
of their lives. And if they have struggled  
in opposition to vicious customs, and lived  
agreeably to the mind of God, without the  
help of that guidance which revelation af-  
fords ; how great will be our condemna-  
tion, if with all the light of the gospel, all  
that clear knowledge which it gives us of  
our duty, and all the powerful encourage-  
ments and other motives whereby it excites  
us to the practice, we fall short and act  
contrary to it ?

IN such a case, there will be no room to  
find fault with the constitution of the gos-  
pel, as if that was defective or insufficient to  
answer the ends of religion. It will still not-  
withstanding be the best revelation in the  
world, though it fails of effecting our salva-  
tion, and aggravates our misery. It will ap-  
pear, that the fault was not in the gospel  
constitution, but in our not attending to it,  
and not improving the advantages it afford-  
ed. God will still appear to have been true  
and



SERM. and faithful, in all those *great and precious*

XII. *promises*, which by the gospel were set before us. For those promises are made to such, as comply with the design of the gospel, and not to those who despise and disobey it. So he was just, in his regards to the covenant into which he entered with the *Jews*, when he took them for his peculiar people, notwithstanding the severity he exercised towards them, when after a long course of disobedience he rejected them; which is the case mentioned by the apostle in our text. *What if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar: as it is written, that thou mayest be justified in thy sayings, and mayest overcome when thou art judged.* Obedience was justly required on the part of God's covenanted people: and without this they were not entitled to the goodness and kindness promised on his part. If therefore they became incorrigibly evil and disobedient; their wicked disobedience must be blamed for all the consequences: but his faithfulness can no way be impeached, while he fulfils his promise to those, who perform their part in the covenant.

LET this terrible example of the rejection of the *Jews*, who were once God's peculiar covenanted people, set us upon resolutions to make a better improvement of the revelation

*no disproof of its real worth.*

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lation with which we are blessed, than they SERM.  
did of theirs. Let the salutary grace of God, XII.  
displayed in the gospel, have its genuine ef-  
fect upon us; in *teaching us to deny ungodliness*  
*and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righte-*  
*ously and godlily, in this present world; look-*  
*ing for that blessed hope, and the appearance*  
*of the glory of the great God, and of our Sa-*  
*viour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us,*  
*that he might redeem us from all iniquity,*  
*and purify unto himself a peculiar people zea-*  
*lous of good works.*



SER-



## S E R M O N XIII.

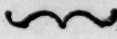
Eternal life the great promise of the  
gospel.

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I JOHN ii. 25.

*And this is the promise which he  
hath promised us; even eternal  
life.*

**T**IS with great truth and justice that the apostle *Peter* affirms, (2 *Pet.* i. 4.) that by the gospel are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by them we might be made partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption which is in the world through lust. And there is no doubt, that this apostle, whose words I have chosen as the foundation of my discourse, was well acquainted with all those promises. Yet in the text he speaks of the promise of eternal life, as if it was the only promise contained in the gospel: *This is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life.* And this he says, in pursuance of what he had been affirming in the preceding

ceding verse, for encouraging christians to SERM.  
continue in the pure and uncorrupted doc- XIII.  
trine of christianity : assuring them, that   
*if that which they had heard from the be-*  
*ginning remained in them,* i. e. if they them-  
selves stedfastly adhered to it in its native  
simplicity, and did not sophisticate or cor-  
rupt it, *they should continue in the Son and*  
*in the Father* ; that is, they should conti-  
nue in the favour and affection of the Son  
of God, to whose doctrine they adhered ;  
and consequently, in the favour and affec-  
tion of God his heavenly Father, whose  
mind and will that doctrine was, and who  
sent him into the world to preach it.

IT is, I say, in pursuance of this de-  
claration, in the words immediately before  
my text, that in the text itself the apostle  
speaks of *the promise of eternal life*, as if it  
were *the* one and only *promise*, which Christ  
had made in his gospel. Perhaps his reason  
might be, because *eternal life* is the consum-  
mation of all the other blessings promised  
in the gospel ; the great end and design,  
to which they all tend. Or he might  
speak of *eternal life* as *the promise of Christ*,  
because it is to his doctrine alone that we  
are indebted for the sure and certain hope  
of it, as well as by his doctrine prepared  
and made meet for it. But whatever was  
the particular reason for speaking in this  
singular and emphatical manner : it is cer-  
Y  
tain ;



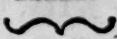
S E R M. tain ; that Christ did in his doctrine deli-

XIII. ver *the promise of eternal life* ; that it is by his

~~~~~ doctrine we are made meet for the happiness it promises ; that he placed *life and immortality* in a clearer *light*, than they were ever placed in before ; and moreover, that *eternal life* is *the grand promise* of the gospel, and the consummation of all the blessings therein promised. Yet the apostle, when he was speaking of that *life*, which is the subject of Christ's *promise*, could not confine his views to futurity, even though he spoke of it under the character of *eternal*. For any one who carefully reads the four gospels, and particularly that written by this apostle *John*, will see, that there is something in the nature of the *life* itself, upon which a great stress is laid, for setting forth the eminency of that blessing. And the consideration of this, together with that of *eternity* annexed to it, and the enquiry who are the persons to whom this *eternal life* is promised, and the good reason we have to believe that this promise will be fulfilled, will be a useful employment to our thoughts. I propose therefore, in discoursing on this text,

I. To shew, that our blessed Lord did in his ministry dwell very much upon *the promise of life, eternal life* ; and at the same time to consider who were the persons, to whom he made this *promise*.

II. To

II. To enquire somewhat particularly SERM.
into the nature and excellency of that *life* XIII.
which Christ promised ; and the reasons, 
why the happiness of Christ's faithful fol-
lowers is by him called *life* by way of
eminency.

III. To consider the character of *eter-*
nity, added to that *life* which will be the
happiness of Christ's true disciples.

IV. To mention briefly the good rea-
son we have to believe, that Christ's *pro-*
mise of eternal life will be made good to
all those, to whom he has promised it.

I. I AM to shew, that our blessed Lord
did in his ministry dwell much upon *the*
promise of life, eternal life ; and to confi-
der who were the persons to whom he
made this *promise*. Now for this purpose
little more is needful, than to turn to the
passages themselves in the gospels, which
relate to this subject. And 'tis because the
same texts, which mention *the promise of*
life, mention likewise the persons to whom
it is promised, that I join the considera-
tion of these two things together.

As for the evangelist *Matthew* : besides
the many places where he introduces our
Lord, as speaking of the saints future hap-
piness by the name of the *kingdom of bea-*
ven, and *kingdom of God*, and *kingdom of*
their Father ; he tells us, that at the end
of a large description of the process of the

SERM. last day, Christ assured his disciples, *Mat.*

XIII. xxv. 46. that *the righteous shall go into life eternal*. To the like purpose is that passage in *Mark*, ch. x. 30. that they, who for his sake lose the advantages and comforts of the present life, *shall in the world to come receive life everlasting* : which in the parallel place, *Mat.* xix. 29. is expressed by *inheriting everlasting life*. And so likewise in *Luke* x. 25. it was concerning this *eternal life*, that the lawyer in an ensnaring manner asked our Lord, what he should do to *inherit it* ; and received for answer, that if he kept the commandments he should *live*.

BUT the evangelist *John* does of all the rest abound the most, in recording our Lord's discourses concerning *eternal life*, and particularly his *promising* it to his disciples. According to the account which he has given, Christ declares, chap. iii. 16. that the very design of God's wonderful love in sending him into the world was, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. And agreeably hereto he declares with an asseveration, chap. v. 24. *Verily, verily, I say unto you ; he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life*. In the same chapter, ver. 29. he assures his hearers, that in the last day
they

they who have done good shall come forth SERM.
unto the resurrection of life; which in the XIII.
 same verse he opposes to *the resurrection of* 
condemnation. Chap. x. 28. he declares con-
 cerning all those who hear his voice and
 follow him; *I give unto them eternal life,*
and they shall never perish. In chap. xii.
 25. he promises; that they who for his
 sake give up life in this world, shall keep
 it unto *life eternal*. And ver. 50. he declares
 in general; that his father's command-
 ment, that is, obedience to it, is *life ever-*
lasting. And finally, chap. xvii. 3. that *this*
is life eternal, that we should know the Fa-
ther the only true God, and Jesus Christ
whom he hath sent.

THESE are but a few out of many pas-
 sages, where our Lord speaks of *everlasting*
 or *eternal life*; and gives assurance of it,
 to the *righteous*, to *those who have done good*,
those who obey the commands of God, and
 are content to *suffer for their fidelity to*
him; *those who believe in the Son of God,*
and in the Father who sent him. And it
 is very proper to observe; that what is in
 most of these texts expressed by the name
 of *eternal* or *everlasting life*, is in other
 places, for very good reasons, expressed by
 the name of *life*, absolutely speaking, with-
 out any mention of eternity annexed. It must
 plainly be this *eternal life*, which our Saviour
 means, when he tells the enquirer, Mat.

SERM. XIX. 17. *If thou wilt enter into life, keep*

XIII. *the commandments*: for the very question put to Jesus was, *What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* ver. 16. And, by the way, this enquiry of the lawyer, compared with our Saviour's appeal to the *Jews* in general, *Joh. v. 39.* that *in the scriptures they concluded they had eternal life*, is a proof that the *Jews* had some expectation of an *eternal life* of happiness, to be bestowed upon the favourites of the Almighty, before Christ placed that doctrine in its clearest light; and that they had not their views confined to an earthly paradise. But whatever was the expectation of the *Jews* before Christ's coming; and whatever in particular was the expectation of the *worthies*, mentioned in *Heb. ix.* concerning which learned men are divided: yet we plainly see, that our Lord Jesus abounded, in the course of his ministry, in delivering the *promise* of *eternal life*; and even declared, that for this very end God in his love to mankind sent him into the world, that *whosoever believed in him should have everlasting life.*

BUT how much soever our Lord abounded in delivering this *promise*, and shewed his delight therein; yet it is easy to observe, from the several passages wherein the promise is contained, that it is either expressly or by necessary consequence limited
to

to persons prepared and disposed for receiving the benefit of it. *Eternal life* is no where in the gospel *promised* to unbelievers, to the *wicked* and *profane*, to the *despisers* of God and all that is good ; or even to those who are negligent in the service of God, careless whether they do any good or not : nor is it promised to any of those, who, where the gospel of Christ is preached, are indifferent whether they regard him and his message, or not. No : on the other hand, *the promise* is always made to persons prepared and fitted for it in the disposition of their minds ; to such as by an operative faith in Christ are purified from sinful defilements, and brought to the love of God and to habits of real goodness. And in the same verse where Christ declares, that *the righteous shall go into life eternal*, he likewise declares, that *the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment* : Mat. xxv. 46. So likewise *Joh. v. 29.* in the same breath in which he declares, that *they who have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life*, he adds ; that *they who have done evil shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation*. And in chap. iii. where he declares, that *God sent his Son, that the world through him might be saved, and that whosoever believeth on him might have everlasting life* ; he declares likewise in the next words, making a close

SERM. connexion between *unbelief* and *perver-*

XIII. *ness of mind*; that *he who believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God*; and that *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* Joh. iii. 16--19. Concerning such persons therefore it is added in the last verse of the chapter, that *he who believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Now, let *belief* in this and other places have ever so much regard to *obedience*; yet how they can be said to *obey* Christ's precepts, who set him ~~him~~ at defiance, and choose to proclaim to the world, that the morality they practise towards God or men, they practise without any regard to Christ, not believing that he was ever sent of God to direct or assist them in it; I own I cannot understand.

HAVING thus shewn, that our Lord did in his ministry dwell very much upon *the promise of eternal life*; and having considered who were the persons, to whom he made this promise; I proceed now,

II. To enquire somewhat particularly into the nature and excellency of this *life* which Christ *promised*; and the reasons why the happiness of his faithful followers is by him called *life* by way of eminency.

WE have seen, that what is sometimes S E R M.
called *eternal life*, is in other places of the XIII.
new testament called *life* absolutely, with-
out any epithet added. Thus in the place
last quoted; Joh. iii. 36. *He that believeth
not the Son shall not see life.* So Mat. xviii.
8. *It is better to enter into life maimed, &c.*
But more especially to this purpose is, Joh.
x. 10. *I am come that they might have life;
and that they might have it more abundant-
ly:* and chap. xx. 31. *These are written,
that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ;
and that believing ye might have life through
his name.* Agreeably hereto, St. Paul writ-
ing to Timothy, 2 Ep. i. 1. speaks indefi-
nitely of *the promise of life, which is in
Christ Jesus.* And St. Peter speaks of
christians as *heirs of the grace of life;*
1 Pet. iii. 7. And the epistle wherein is
our text has several expressions of this kind:
where, by *life* can be meant no other, than
that truly happy condition, which is be-
gun in the present state by a conformity
to God; and that resemblance, together
with all the blessed effects of it, increased
in a future state, which shall never have
an end. Particularly, that is a remarkable
passage, 1 Job. v. 12. where the apostle de-
clares, that *he who hath the Son*, that is,
who is a faithful disciple of the Son, *hath
life; but he who hath not the Son of God,
hath not life.* And what *life* the apostle
here

SERM. here means, there is no danger of mistake

XIII. ing; because in the words next preceding he says, *This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

ALL these passages concur to shew; that the *life*, of which they thus speak by way of eminency, is a life fit to be eternally continued. And, besides that there are many texts, which represent a state of sin and opposition to God as deserving condemnation and death at his hands, or speak of sinners as under the sentence of death: there are others, which represent the unlikeness to God as being in its own nature a state of *death*, which speak of sinners as being by sin *alienated from* that which is the *life* of the soul: and others again, which speak of *life*, with regard to the joy naturally arising from a regular disposition of mind, attended with a sense of divine approbation; whereas sorrow and depression of spirit are both in scripture and in common speech compared to *death*. And besides these things we are to consider, that that happy state, which shall have no period put to it, does much more properly deserve the name of *life*, than that which shall be cut off by death. So that there is abundance of reason, for calling that future state of happiness, which Christ has promised to his faithful followers, by the name

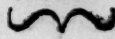
name of *life*. But these things deserve to be a little more particularly considered. SERM.
XIII.

I. LET us begin with that, which is the basis and foundation of happiness, which must always be internal; the disposition of the soul itself; which according to the nature of things cannot possibly be happy, while irregular affections prevail within it, or indeed till it be brought to a liking and a delight in those things, which are fit to be required of it, as being suited to its frame, and to the condition in which it is placed. 'Tis certain, that *life* is in scripture promised under the notion of happiness. Such a *life* therefore must be understood, as would be a real happiness to the persons to whom the *promise* is made. Now, considering that the soul or spirit within us is the principal part of our frame; no other kind of *life* can be a happiness to us, but what is suited to the nature of our spirits. These spirits of ours are indeed nearly related to the bodies they inhabit. But if this inferior part of our constitution is capable of gratifications, the unlimited indulging of which would prejudice the nobler part; then it is evident, that the happiness of the whole man must consist, not in unlimited indulgences of the animal kind, but in such a tenor of life and action as the mind can justify and delight in upon reflexion; such a course as is suited to
its

SERM. its own noble faculties, to its dependence

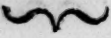
XIII. upon God, and to the relation wherein
 he has placed us all towards each other.

And indeed, any other course, than such as I have been describing, cannot properly be called *life*, when applied to such beings as we are. It is not the *life* we were formed for. The indulgence of animal appetites, in opposition to the dictates of judgment and the reason of things, is fitly called *death*. 'Tis the suppressing and destroying of the principle of *life* within us. Accordingly *sinners* are in the new testament represented as *dead in trespasses and sins*; and *quicken'd* or brought to *life*, by the gospel of Christ. *Eph. ii. 1.* So, chap. v. 14. they are called upon to *awake from sleep, and to arise from the dead*. They are likewise said to be *alienated from the life of God*, who is *the Father of spirits*; chap. iv. 18. All these images are very just and proper; as they make that *life*, which is the happiness of the man, to consist in what is suited to the perfection of his nature; and *death* in the depravation of it. Agreeably hereto, in the epistle wherein is our text, the apostle tells us, that the design of the blessed God in sending his only begotten Son into the world, was *that we might live through him*; 1 Joh. iv. 9. The reason of which must be, because by sin we were in a state of *death*; and this, not merely

merely in respect of condemnation, but SERM.
what St. *Paul* in the forecited place calls XIII.
alienation from the life of God, alienation
from his likeness in his moral perfections. 

IT was to raise us from this *death*, that
the gospel of Christ was designed; *to save*
us from our sins; Mat. i. 21. *to redeem us*
from all iniquity; Tit. ii. 14. *to destroy the*
works of the devil; 1 Joh. iii. 8. And 'tis
certain, that by conforming to the pre-
cepts of the gospel, (which conformity is
always included in that *believing in Christ*,
to which he makes the promise of *eternal*
life; 'tis certain, I say, that by conform-
ing to the precepts of the gospel) the foun-
dation of *life eternal* is laid within us.
For the faith of Christ is, throughout the
new testament, shewn to be of a *purifying*
nature, cleansing the soul from defilements,
and rescuing it from the power of corrupt
affections. And accordingly, it proves true
in fact, that the more closely we adhere to
the doctrine of Christ, the more we are
confirmed in that divine *life*, which is to
be compleated in an eternity of happiness.
The happiness itself is begun and carried
on in that course of life, to which the
gospel of Christ directs. The *life* itself is
happiness; just so much the greater in its
degree, even in the present state, as it ad-
vances in its victory over corrupt affections,
and in habits of real goodness. And
there

S E R M. there is nothing wanting to the comple-

XIII.  tion of the happiness, but the removal of those temptations and, snares, those infirmities and consequent sorrows, which attend us in the present state of trial. By reason of these difficulties, the life which we lead here below does not deserve to be called by the name of *life*, in comparison of that, which we hope to enjoy when all difficulties shall be removed. But for the same reason, that *life*, which christians have in prospect, deserves to be called *life*, by way of eminency and distinction.

W H E N therefore Christ promises *eternal life* to those who believe and obey him ; he promises that, which is in its own nature closely connected with what he requires from them ; he promises that happiness, the substance of which, upon a removal from the imperfections of the present state, they would of course enjoy, unless an end should be put to their existence ; though they could not have known so much concerning it as now we do, or have been sure of the everlasting continuance of it, if Christ had not come and made the *promise*, attended with such circumstances, as proved it to be *the promise of the Father who sent him*. And this sure connexion, between the promised happiness and the means which Christ in his gospel provides, to make us partakers of it, shews the great
pro-

propriety of those expressions, wherein Christ SERM. himself is said to *give eternal life*, Joh. x. 28. XIII. and wherein *eternal life* is said to be *the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*. Rom. vi. 23. But I observe further,

2. THAT even in the present state, the happiness of those who have an inward sense of adhering to the substance of their duty, which is always attended with a sense of divine approbation, is very fitly called *life*, on account of the joy, which these things naturally produce. Joy is called *life*, and sorrow *death*, in many places of scripture, as well as in common speech. 'Tis plainly in this sense, that St. Paul said to the *Thessalonians*, 1 Ep. iii. 8. *Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord*. And indeed he shews this to be his meaning in the next words, speaking of the great joy which he had in his heart on their account. But more directly to this purpose is the *Psalmist's* expression, *Psal. xxx. 5. that in God's favour is life*.

Now the joy arising from the considerations abovementioned is fitly called *life*, as it is agreeable to and resulting from that regularity, which we have already shewn to be properly called *life* in another respect. Worldly men indeed have their joys; joys which seem to make them more *alive* than others, who have a better right to be joyful. But as these joys are of a low and ignoble

SERM. ignoble kind, so must be the *life* which
 XIII. they denominate. 'Tis mere animal life ;
 ~~~~~ or something very little above it ; something  
 vastly beneath the pleasures and satisfactions  
 of a mind, rejoicing in a sense of divine fa-  
 vour, from the assurance that God will ap-  
 prove and take delight in what is agreeable  
 to his own declared mind, and to the testi-  
 mony which himself has placed within us.  
 To this purpose I shall quote you a passage  
 from the epistle wherein is our text, 1 Joh.  
 iii. 19—22. *Hereby we know that we are  
 of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before  
 God. For if our hearts condemn us, God is  
 greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.  
 Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then  
 have we confidence towards God. And what-  
 soever we ask, we receive of him, because we  
 keep his commandments, and do those things  
 which are pleasing in his sight.*

THIS inward joy and satisfaction is, I  
 say, one constituent of that *life*, which is  
 the subject of our Lord's *promise*, to those  
 that obey him : and this being begun  
 here, and maintained in a persevering course  
 of obedience, will be completed in that  
 eternal state of happiness, where no sorrow  
 can intermingle with our joys, because we  
 shall be in no danger of returning to those  
 follies, which are the chief cause of sorrow  
 in the present state.

I MIGHT have spoken more largely con-  
 cerning

cerning joy, as an ingredient of *life*, considered under the notion of happiness, by observing ; that all the circumstances of that future felicity, which Christ promises to his followers, will contribute to make them joyful. They will, in that happy state, have no pain or sickness or weariness of body ; no anxious cares upon the mind ; none of those sorrows, which men who are easie in other respects suffer here on account of the ill conduct or ill success of their relatives ; no provocations ; no temptations or snares endangering their virtue : but on the contrary, such health and vigour both of body and mind ; such large improvement of the intellectual faculties, and regular employment of them ; such ease and tranquility ; such encouragement in the practice of every thing that is good and lovely, by the example of all around them ; such delightful converse with angels and the spirits of the perfected just ; such exalted views of divine wisdom, righteousness and goodness, in the dispensations of providence, but especially in the great affair of redemption ; such ravishing sights of the redeemer's glory, who accomplished that great work ; and above all, such testimonies of divine approbation and complacency ; as will in the strongest sense verifie those words of our blessed Lord, Joh. x. 10. *I am come,*

Z

*that*

SERM.  
XIII.



SERM. *that they might have life, and that they might*  
 XIII. *have it more abundantly.*

THE happy life, resulting from that regularity and that consequent joy of which I have been treating, is often spoken of in the new testament, as appointed by God, in the character of judge, to be the portion of those *who obey the gospel of his Son*; and the contrary miserable condition, sometimes described by the name of *death*, is spoken of as the punishment, to which the wicked and unbelieving are condemned. These things are included in that opposition between *life* and *condemnation*, mentioned by our Saviour, *Joh. v. 24.* though the foundation of the *life* itself is even there laid in what we have been hearing. *Verily, verily, I say unto you; he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.* The same is the purport of the opposition mentioned in ver. 29. *that they who have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation.* The same is included in those words, chap. iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: but he that believeth not the Son, (he that obeyeth not, ὁ ἀπειθῶν) shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* The  
 wrath

wrath of God, abiding upon the unbelieving and disobedient soul, is here spoken of as its *death*, by way of opposition to that *life*, that *everlasting life*, which is made the portion of the true believer. And it is to the very same purpose, that our Lord speaks in ver. 18, 19. concerning the *condemnation* of those, *who believe not on the name of the Son of God*, and *who when light shines upon them, love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil*; and this, in opposition to that *eternal life*, which in the foregoing verses is spoken of as the certain portion of those *who believe*. It was in this view, that our Lord blamed the pernicious obstinacy of the unbelieving *Jews*, Joh. v. 40. that *they would not come unto him that they might have life*: and in chap. viii. 24. plainly denounced to them, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*. It was upon this principle, that *Paul* and *Barnabas* declared likewise to the contradicting and blaspheming *Jews*, Acts xiii. 46. that by putting away the word of God, that is, the gospel, from them, *they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life*.

BUT there is no need of multiplying texts of scripture to this purpose. 'Tis sufficient to observe, how agreeable it is to the wisdom of the supreme governour of all, that when he puts into mens hands the gracious means of preparing for a *life* of eternal happiness,

SERM. and grants the good prospect of such a  
 XIII. happiness ; and when the means are such,  
 ~~~~~ as approve themselves to the judgment and  
 conscience, as fit to be complied with, even
 in case there were no special promise of hap-
 piness annexed ; he should make those fi-
 nally happy, in the most intimate commu-
 nications of his favour, who comply with
 the means appointed ; and that they who
 refuse compliance should remain under his
 displeasure, and feel the dreadful effects of
 it.

THUS I have somewhat largely confi-
 dered two reasons, why the happiness pro-
 mised to Christ's faithful servants may justly
 be called *life* by way of eminency. Ano-
 ther very good reason is, because the hap-
 piness called by this name shall always con-
 tinue, and never have an end put to it. For
 this reason no other *life*, particularly no life
 which shall have a period put to it by death,
 deserves to be called *life*, in comparison with
 it. But as I have proposed to treat of *eter-*
nity under a distinct head of discourse ; this
 reason may very fitly be considered there.



S E R M O N X I V .

Eternal life the great promise of the
gospel.

I JOHN ii. 25.

*And this is the promise which he
hath promised us ; even eternal
life.*

I N a former discourse on these words I shewed : that our blessed Lord did in his ministry dwell very much upon the *promise of life, eternal life* : that in the several passages wherein this promise is mentioned, it is either expressly or by necessary consequence limited to persons prepared and fitted in the disposition of their minds for enjoying the happiness promised : that the *promise of eternal life* is made only to the *righteous, those that do good, those who obey the commands of God, and are content to suffer for their fidelity to him, those who believe in the Son of God, and in the Father who sent him, and such like ; but is never made to unbelievers, to the wicked and profane, to*

SERM. the *despisers* of God and all that is good, or

XIV. even to those, who are negligent in the service of God, and careless whether they do any good or not. And this was the substance of the thoughts delivered under the first head of discourse.

UNDER the second head I enquired into the nature and excellency of that *life* which Christ *promised*; and into the reasons, why the happiness of his faithful followers is by him called *life* by way of eminency. And here it was observed: that *life* being promised under the notion of happiness, such a *life* must be understood, as would be a real happiness to those to whom the promise is made; such a life as is suited to the perfection of their nature, freed from the slavery of irregular affections: that this regularity, and the joy which naturally attends it, do constitute such a *life*, as is most of all desirable to beings of our make; and are therefore, with very good reason, called by our Saviour *life* by way of eminency. It was likewise observed: that the happy life thus described is often in the new testament spoken of, as assigned by the blessed God, in the character of judge, to those *who obey the gospel of Christ*; and the contrary miserable condition, sometimes described by the name of *death*, is spoken of as the punishment, to which

which the *wicked* and *unbelieving* are condemned. SERM.
XIV.

I COME now to consider,

III. THE character of *eternity*; in our text, and in many other passages of scripture annexed to the *life* which Christ *promised* to the faithful.

THIS deserves to be distinctly considered, because of the vast addition which it makes to the happiness promised. It has been already observed, that the foundation of happiness being laid in the heart, by the principle of holiness, the happiness of the persevering faithful will of course be everlasting, unless an end be put to their existence. Now since without the help of revelation they could not be absolutely sure, even that they shall always continue to exist; and since the most high was determined to make their happiness exceed their own utmost hopes, as well as infinitely out-weigh their best services; it was worthy his wisdom and goodness to assure them by his own promise, that it shall be *everlasting*.

HE would not suffer the continuance of so great a felicity to be precarious and uncertain; well knowing, that by how much the greater the felicity itself should be, there would be so much the more reason to desire, that it might never cease, and to be secured from the anxious fears of being sometime or other deprived of it. He

SERM. has prevented all such fears, by interposing
 XIV. his own promise, *the promise of God who cannot lie*, to assure them, that *eternal life* shall be the portion of the faithful.

THE happiness therefore, to which the saints shall be advanced in the future state, shall have no end. And surely this character of *eternity* is a good reason, additional to those before-mentioned, why the happiness itself should be called *life* by way of eminency ; because it shall never be broken off by death. To them who live this life there shall be no more death, but all *life*, all happiness, in an increasing likeness to God, and growing communications of his favour, without any fear of a deprivation. Such a state of happiness is properly called *life*, by way of distinction from any kind of life, which has always death for its attendant, and which after a short continuance shall have a final end put to it by death. And yet this is the true character of our life in this world. Besides that death, considered as a final separation from our present enjoyments, is daily and gradually coming upon us ; there is such a mixture of sin and sorrow with all our goodness and all our joys, that we may always here be said to be dying while we are alive. In the midst of life we are in death.

WHAT a glorious addition then does the character of *eternity* give to that *life*, which shall

shall be the portion of Christ's faithful followers? An endless duration of a complete happiness! a happiness as complete, as they themselves in their raised state shall be capable of enjoying! 'Tis easy to lose ourselves in this delightful and astonishing thought. And therefore I shall proceed no further in it: but in few a words,

IV. REPRESENT to you what good reason we have to believe, that *Christ's promise of eternal life* will be made good to all those to whom he has promised it.

Now we may have the most full satisfaction here from these considerations: that though we could not have had a full assurance of this *eternal life* without a revelation from heaven; yet the bestowing it upon those, for whom the gospel tells us it was designed, is not only consistent with the perfections of the supreme governour, but reflects a visible glory upon them: and then further; that we have all the concurrence of external proofs and testimonies that we can desire, that what our blessed Lord herein promised, he was by God the Father impowered and directed to promise.

ACKNOWLEDGING very heartily, that all the most faithful obedience we can pay to the blessed God can never merit at his hands that *eternal life* of happiness, which he has promised to the faithful: yet as it is suitable to the supreme wisdom and righteousness

SERM. teousness of the great governour, to encourage with the assurance of his favour, and

XIV.  with the hopes of a glorious reward, all those, who shall persevere in their duty, in a state of trial attended with dangerous snares and difficulties; so it is likewise suitable to his supreme goodness, that his rewards should be vastly greater than we could be able to promise to ourselves. It is fit that they should be suited to the greatness of that wonderful love, from which they proceed.

AND then: as to the proofs of Christ's being authorized and sent of God to make this promise; I do not see how it will be possible to prove any thing to those, whom these proofs will not satisfy. If Christ's own living in a perfect conformity to the holy doctrine which he taught, and appealing to innumerable miraculous works as testimonies of his divine mission, and laying down his life for persisting to affirm that God sent him, then rising from the dead, agreeably to his own prediction, and sending down upon his followers, and them only, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, will not prove, that the promises which Christ made in God's name, and which are so agreeable to his perfections as governour of the world, were really the promises of God: then I despair of proving, that we can know any thing of the
mind

mind of God at all. But indeed, these SERM.
things are the just foundation of a full as- XIV.
surance, that the promise of *eternal life*,
made by our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be ful-
filled: and that this unspeakable gift shall
certainly be bestowed upon all those, to
whom Christ in his gospel has *promised* it.

THUS I have considered what is included
in the *promise of eternal life*, and who are
the persons to whom the *promise* is made,
and the abundant assurance we have, that
it shall be made good to them. And from
what we have heard it will be no great
difficulty to make some practical improve-
ment.

I. IT becomes us to enquire, whether
we ourselves have *any part or lot in this mat-
ter*; any interest in *the promise*, of which
we have been hearing. *The promise of eter-
nal life* is not made to us merely upon our
being born in a place, where the doctrine of
Christ is professed and taught: for at that
rate all those who are born in a christian
country would be sure to be eternally hap-
py, without any choice of their own; and
many of them contrary to the deliberate
choice of their wills; eternally happy by
virtue of a scheme of religion, for which
they have the utmost contempt, and which
they continue to despise to the end of their
lives. But this is too absurd a thought, to
be entertained by any considering mind.

We

SERM. We have already been put in mind, that in
 XIV. most places of the new testament where *the*
 ~~~~~ *promise of eternal life* is mentioned, the per-  
 sons are described, to whom it is made. In  
 the same breath, where the promise is made,  
 the persons are described, as *believers* in Je-  
 sus Christ, and *obedient* subjects of his king-  
 dom: they are called *his sheep, who hear*  
*his voice and follow him*; *the righteous, who*  
*obey the commands of God*, and employ them-  
 selves in *doing good*. To such as these Christ  
 declares *he gives eternal life, and that none*  
*none shall pluck them out of his hand*. Con-  
 cerning such he promises in the most absolute  
 manner, that *they shall enter into life eternal*.  
 And at the same time he expressly declares  
 to those who disobey his precepts, or refuse  
 to become his disciples when his doctrine is  
 made known to them, that *they shall not see*  
*life, but the wrath of God shall abide upon*  
*them*. And I make no doubt, we all ac-  
 knowledge 'tis an absurd thing, to hope  
 for eternal happiness by viture of *the pro-*  
*mise of Christ*, while we refuse to be guided  
 by that holy doctrine of his, which was de-  
 signed to be the very means to prepare us  
 for it, and to lead us to it.

Now if we are in earnest in enquiring  
 whether the promise belongs to us, the ex-  
 plication which has been given concerning  
 the life promised will enable us to give a sa-  
 tisfactory answer. We have seen that they,  
 who



who are heirs of *the promise of eternal life*, SERM.  
have that *life* begun within them in this XIV.

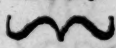
world : that it consists in a likeness of God,   
on which account it is called *the life of God* :  
from which *divine life* they are said to be  
*alienated*, who are found in the practice of  
*wicked works*. The seeds of *eternal life* must  
be sown within us in this world, and cherish-  
ed by us in the course of our conversation.  
We must give proofs of our being the *chil-*  
*dren of God*, by resembling him in *righte-*  
*ousness and true holiness*, if we would satis-  
fie ourselves that we are heirs of immorta-  
lity. Hear the declaration of the beloved  
apostle, who was intimately acquainted with  
the mind of his lord and master : 1 Joh. iii.  
7---10. *Little children, let no man deceive*  
*you : he that doth righteousness is righteous,*  
*even as he is righteous. He that committeth*  
*sin, is of the devil. For this purpose the Son*  
*of God was manifested, that he might destroy*  
*the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of*  
*God, doth not commit sin : for his seed remain-*  
*eth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is*  
*born of God. In this the children of God are*  
*manifest, and the children of the devil : who-*  
*soever doth not righteousness, is not of God, nei-*  
*ther he that loveth not his brother.*

There is, it seems, danger, that men may  
*deceive themselves* in this important affair.  
And 'tis to be feared, that many have de-  
ceived themselves, by resting satisfied in  
some



S E R M. something short of a *divine life*, while they

XIV. entertained the hope of *life eternal*. But how  
 ~~~~~ miserable is this delusion? And how foolish  
 is the imagination; that we may lead a life
 of *unrighteousness*, and *unlikeness to God* here,
 making that the constant tenor of our actions
 by the deliberate choice of our minds; and
 yet that upon being removed out of the state
 of trial, we shall on a sudden be changed,
 and made all holy and all happy; that we
 shall on a sudden delight in that God, whose
 commands we have through our whole
 course of life disobeyed and despised; that
 we shall above all things take pleasure in a
 conformity to him, and in celebrating his
 praises; that we shall on a sudden give him
 the whole of our affections, and rejoice in
 the society of those holy beings who sur-
 round his throne! How foolish, I say, is
 the thought; how vain the expectation? Shall death perform that within us, which
 all the advantages in life could never pre-
 vail on us to seek after? Is there any thing
 in the mere removal to an unseen state, that
 can thus work upon us? Will death change
 intirely the disposition of our minds, from
 one course to the quite contrary? Is there
 any thing in reason, or in the christian re-
 ligion, that should lead us to such a thought?
 'Tis certain, there is not. If from the light
 of our own minds we can gather any thing
 certain concerning a future state, we shall
 con-

conclude, that the habits, which we contract SERM.
in the present state of trial, will by our re- XIV.
moval from it be fixed within us. And as 
for the doctrine of the new testament: that
not only teaches us, that *we must stand*
before the judgment-seat of Christ, there to
receive according to what we have done in
the body, whether it be good or evil; but like-
wise that we must be *alive unto God here,*
and *walk in newness of life,* that we must be
risen with Christ, and prove it by *seeking*
those things which are above, if we would
hope to *appear with him in glory*; and that
all they who entertain the blessed hope of
the sons of God, must *purifie themselves as he*
is pure.

HERE then is a sure test of our enter-
taining upon good grounds the humble hope
of *eternal life.* And a humble hope it ought
to be. It is this one grand question: whe-
ther we are brought into a resemblance of
God, such as is suited to the condition in
which we are placed, by being conformed to
his holy commands. 'Tis holiness in us to love
and honour our creator, and shew a reverent
sense of him in the whole course of our
actions. 'Tis holiness in us to be just and
righteous, meek and gentle, kind and bene-
volent to our fellow creatures, and to fill
up the several relations in life with decen-
cy. 'Tis holiness in us to abstain from pride
and unreasonable passion, and all corrupt
affections,

S E R M. affections, from whatever would defile the
 XIV. *flesh or spirit.* This is *perfecting holiness in*
 ~~~~~ *the fear of God*; for this is suiting ourselves  
 perfectly to that condition in which we are  
 placed: as it is holiness in the blessed God  
 himself, to follow the eternal rules of righ-  
 teousness in the government of the world.

By this test let us judge, whether *the*  
*divine life* be formed within us, and whe-  
 ther we may hope, that the *promise of eter-*  
*nal life* is made to us. I do not mean, that  
 we should entertain no hope of eternal life  
 without an exact and perfect conformity  
 to every part of our duty. No: at that  
 rate there would be no hope remaining for  
 the best of us all: and they who have care-  
 fully read the new testament know, that  
 there is in the doctrine of Christ provision  
 made for our infirmities, for the imperfec-  
 tion of our best services, and for the many  
 failings wherewith we are overtaken. But  
 God knows how to judge of the prevailing  
 bent of our minds and tenour of our actions:  
 and so likewise do we ourselves. And if  
 we are in earnest in our enquiries, we can-  
 not be mistaken in judging, whether *the*  
*life of God* is formed within us, or whether  
 we remain *dead in trespasses and sins*. If  
 this latter be the case, we are sure that *the*  
*promise of eternal life* does not belong to us.  
 And consequently, since there is so much  
 grace in the gospel, as always to encourage  
 our

our return to God, always to cherish the SERM.  
hope of his favour wherever there is a se- XIV.  
rious desire and resolution to seek it; it is  
of the utmost importance that we labour  
to get into that way, to which *eternal life*  
is *promised*. I shall therefore

2. EXHORT you to approve yourselves  
of that character, to which Christ has made  
the *promise* of this excellent happiness. Let  
it be your earnest prayer to God, and the  
constant endeavour of your lives, that you  
may be of this character.

HAVE you considered the greatness of  
the blessing; and the lowness of all the  
enjoiments of this world in comparison with  
it? Have you considered what the *life* is,  
in its own nature; that even in its seeds  
and beginnings here below, it infinitely ex-  
ceeds all the riotous delights and disorderly  
pleasures, which arise merely from the  
things of this world? Besides their fleeting  
and transitory nature, it becomes us to con-  
sider, that they are low and ignoble, in  
comparison of the pleasures of the mind:  
and that if, to gratifie our inferior faculties,  
we go beyond the bounds of innocency, let  
the delight be ever so great for a moment,  
it has a sting attending it, which will soon  
render the enjoiment bitter; and that bitter-  
ness will increase and become intolerable,  
unless such a change pass upon us, as shall  
denominate us *alive unto God*, and give us



S E R M. the prospect of that *eternal life*, of which  
XIV. we have been hearing.

AND can we, in the use of our rational faculties, prefer this present *life*, and the gratifications of animal nature, to that which is suited to the perfection of our nobler part, wherein we bear a resemblance to God ? Is there any thing in *the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life*, or in all of them put together, that can for real worth compare with a likeness to God, in *righteousness and true holiness, in peace and love*, in the exalted pleasure of *doing good*, and keeping always at a distance from whatever is injurious or grievous ? Is there any comparison to be made between the one *life* and the other ? And even if there were ; take in this one thought ; *What will the end of these things be ?* Will not that supreme being, who is perfectly wise and righteous and holy, as well as perfectly good, will not he employ his wisdom and power in vindicating his holiness ? Will he not make those persons, in a future state, examples of his just displeasure, who refused in the present state to follow the directions, and encouragements, and warnings, which he gave them ? And can it be worth our while to run into this misery, for the sake of perishing trifles ; and at the same time to despise and turn our backs upon an eternity of supreme happiness, an everlasting separation from all fin

fin and sorrow, and an everlasting increase S E R M.  
of all that is truly good and noble, a con- XIV.  
tinual increase in the most excellent kind  
of knowledge, and confirmed habits of real  
goodness, such as will furnish the most ra-  
tional joy upon reflexion, and the uninter-  
rupted communications of God's favour and  
complacency ?

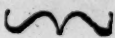
SURELY these things claim our choice,  
if we will exercise our judgments at all.  
And we have seen who are the persons, to  
whom, under the character of *eternal life*,  
they are promised by our Lord Jesus Christ.  
What is it then, that should hinder us from  
yielding that obedience to him, which is  
of the essence of the faith he requires ?  
That faith, whereby we become christians,  
and are entituled to the *promise of eternal  
life*, does not consist in notion and specu-  
lation, but in conforming to the grand design  
of the gospel, which is to *save us from our  
sins, and to destroy the works of the devil*.  
When our faith in Christ produces this ef-  
fect, when our hearts and lives are *purified*  
by it, when we are thereby *renewed in the  
spirit of our mind*, and have *put on the new  
man, which after God is created in righte-  
ousness and true holiness* ; then may we, ac-  
cording to his own intention, *wait for his  
mercy unto eternal life*. But if we only *call  
him Lord, Lord, and do not the will of his  
heavenly Father* ; he will disclaim us, and

SERM. *bid us depart from him as workers of iniquity.*

XIV. But

3. LET those, who have a well-grounded hope of that *eternal life* which Christ hath *promised*, take care to behave always suitably to *that blessed hope*. For this purpose it is necessary, that we abstain from all defilement. For the apostle in this same epistle assures us, that *every one who hath this hope in him*, (the hope of the *sons of God*, the hope of *being* made hereafter more completely *like him*, by *seeing him as he is*; every one who hath this hope in him) *purifieth himself, even as he is pure*. 1 Joh. iii. 3. If we have exercised any tolerable care in this way already, and have thereby, with the assistance of divine grace, gained some happy habits of likeness to God, such as denominate us his children: let us not abate, but strengthen the force of those habits: let us thereby confirm more and more the hope of that *glory, which shall be revealed in the future manifestation of God's children*.

BUT further: we do not act suitably to the *promise*, and the *hope of eternal life*, if we do not maintain cheerfulness of spirit, under our trials in the way to it. Whatever our difficulties are, and some of the afflictions of God's children in this world are very great; still we ought to live and act agreeably to the character of *God's children, who are the heirs of eternal life*. According to

to the doctrine of Christ's gospel, as we have S E R M.  
seen, there is no doubt, that his faithful fol- XIV.  
lowers shall hereafter be blessed with a *life*   
of immortal felicity ; such as they are not  
able to express, or, in its full extent, even  
to conceive. And there is with me as little  
doubt, that one great design of giving so clear  
and strong assurance hereof in the gospel, was  
to enable those faithful disciples to bear, with  
the greater fortitude and decency, the troubles  
of this present life. Let us take care to an-  
swer this design in the course of ~~our~~ actions.  
Whatever our afflictions are ; let it be seen,  
that *the hope of eternal life* carries us above  
them. Let it be seen, that we heartily be-  
lieve Christ's *promise of eternal life*, by that  
uniform course of joy and thankfulness,  
which may justly be expected from those,  
who are influenced by such a principle.







## S E R M O N XV.

The good fight of faith.

---

I TIM. vi. 12.

*Fight the good fight of faith ; lay  
hold on eternal life ; whereunto  
thou art also called, and hast  
professed a good profession before  
many witnesses.*

**W**HATEVER was the particular character and employment of the person to whom this exhortation is addressed ; and whatever the apostle meant in the preceding verse, by calling him *man of God* ; whether he here considered him as set apart to the work of declaring the mind of God, or not : yet the exhortation itself is of such visible importance to all, and the arguments by which it is enforced have so clear a relation to the circumstances and obligations of all professed christians, that there is no need of an apology, for my addressing the same exhortation to all those who have taken on  
them

them the christian profession, or for recommending to others the advantage they may reap, by taking voluntarily the same engagements upon themselves, that they may be within the reach of the same motives. If there is a prize of *eternal life* to be contended for, and set before us all in prospect; then it is of the utmost importance to us all, that we *fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on that prize*. And if all professed christians are *called to it*, and have by their *profession* itself laid themselves under obligations to contend earnestly for it; then their *profession* and their *calling* are great advantages, towards exciting them to a due earnestness in contending for so important a prize. These things are, I think, plain and clear, and do not stand in need of much proof. However it may be useful to discourse on them, for the putting us in mind of those things which we already know: for it is certain, that the ministry of the word was not designed merely for bringing new ideas to our thoughts, but for exciting us to mind those things which are of importance, how well soever we were acquainted with them before.

THAT I may discourse the more usefully on the words I have read; I propose

I. To explain the exhortation they contain.

A a 4

II. To

S E R M. II. To consider the motive with which it  
XV. is enforced.

~~~~~ I. To explain the exhortation contained in the text. Which is expressed in these words: *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.* In both these phrases there is a manifest allusion to the exercises in use among the *Greeks* and *Romans* : wherein, at the most publick assemblies, sometimes collected from several neighbouring countries, men strove for the mastery; displaying the utmost strength and agility of their body and contrivance of their mind, to gain the honour of a victory, and to be rewarded with a prize given on those occasions; which prize was often no better than a *corruptible crown*, a garland of leaves, which would soon fade away.

FOR such a prize as this they must fight very earnestly, and very cautiously too, if they would obtain it. And for such a prize, it is certain, men of prime figure did exert all their skill and strength, and did with eagerness lay hold of the prize, when by their victory they had deserved it. To prepare for such combats, they did not think much to exercise great abstinence and self-denial for a considerable time beforehand, that their bodies might be fit for the labour and agility, which were to be expected at the time of trial. And it is plain, they thought themselves well rewarded by the honour which

which they received upon gaining the victory ; especially as it was sometimes an introduction to the highest employments, and posts of the greatest dignity and importance. SERM.
XV.

To these difficult exercises, and the consequences of them, the apostle manifestly alludes, when he exhorts *Timothy* under the character of a man of God, to *fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold of eternal life*. And if we consider the expressions closely, we shall see that there is a great force in them, as they contain a secret comparison, between the real value of the prize of *eternal life*, and the emptiness of the utmost rewards which could be gained by the exercises alluded to. For the *fight of faith* is a *good fight*, καλὸς ἀγὼν, a combat really honourable and advantageous.

'Tis in itself *honourable* ; as it has a natural tendency to give the superiority within the man himself to that part to which of right it belongs ; to the reason and judgment, rather than to the animal inclinations ; to subdue irregular passions and desires ; to settle such habits, as are agreeable to the relations which man bears towards God his creator, and to the works of his hands and subjects of his government.

THE *fight of faith* is, I say, deservedly called *good*, i. e. *honourable* on this account, with regard to the true wisdom it discovers,
the

SERM. the wisdom of acting agreeably to our nature, and the tendency to restore order and regularity, and to get rid of the confusion which sin has introduced.

BUT it is not to be concealed, that the apostle in the text has, both with regard to the point of honour and advantage, an immediate respect to the prize of *eternal life*, when he calls the *fight of faith* a *good fight*. And we shall easily see he had good reason on his side. For, in respect of honour : let us magnifie in our own minds, as much as we are able, the honour gained by coming off conquerors in wrestling or running, or in a *fight* strictly speaking, before an assembly of people, who would admire and praise the strength and agility, the courage and patience, the skill and dexterity of the conquerors, and thereby prove the means of recommending them to military or other governments : yet there is no comparison between the honour of carrying the prize upon these occasions, and *laying hold on eternal life*, in pursuance of having well *fought the good fight of faith*. For according to the apostle's expression, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. when we have *fought the good fight, and finished our course*, the reward of *eternal life* is bestowed as *a crown of righteousness*, by the *Lord himself, the righteous judge* ; whose approbation in this judicial manner is infinitely greater honour, than the applauses of all creatures

creatures in the world. And further; the SERM.
author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* repre- XV.
sents christians, in their present conflicts, as
being *compassed about with a great cloud of*
witnesses, all of whom have gone before us
in the conflict, and come off victors: they
are represented as looking on, to see how we
will behave: and if we are joined to their
victorious company, their congratulations
will be a much higher honour than that
to which the text alludes. Besides all which,
our Lord himself often speaks of his own-
ing at the last day his faithful followers
before the holy angels: and represents the ju-
dicial process and the distribution of rewards
to the faithful, as made by a being of su-
preme wisdom and dominion, before the
whole world of *angels and men*. So that if
we were to make no particular account of
the real *benefits* contained in the gift of *eter-*
nal life; the *honour* of gaining such a prize
is infinitely greater, than could be gained
by becoming victorious in the exercises to
which the text alludes: and therefore *the*
fight of faith is in that respect justly stiled a
good fight, or rather *the good fight*, in com-
parison wherewith no other deserves to be
called *good*.

BUT besides the *honour*, there are real
benefits in the enjoiment of *eternal life*, on
the account whereof *the fight of faith*, which
will

SERM. will be crowned with this prize, is fitly called *the good fight*.
 XV.

THE subduing of corrupt affections has, as we have seen, a natural tendency to abolish confusion, and to settle order and regularity within the soul. And if this good end is attained in any tolerable degree in the present state, while we are continually surrounded with objects which flatter and solicit our affections, and are necessarily taken up with cares to satisfy the innocent cravings of animal nature : how great will be the happiness of an entire freedom from all disturbance, in the removal of all those difficulties which created confusion here below ? How will the well-habited mind improve its faculties for knowledge, employing them, without interruption, upon the noblest objects ? How will the habits of real goodness be improved, for the very same reason ? And how great and well-grounded will be the joy, from a continual sense of God's approbation and complacency ?

THESE are real *benefits*, of the greatest worth and moment, besides the *honour* included in the prize of *eternal life*, for which we contend in *fighting the good fight of faith*. And by exhorting to *lay hold on eternal life*, immediately after the exhortation to *fight this good fight*, the apostle shews what he meant by

by calling it *the fight of faith*. He means SERM.
XV. that conflict, those difficulties, to which we are exposed, by acting under the view of a future life, by acting as those who believe they were not formed merely for this present world, but were to have their happiness completed in a life which is to come. *We live here by faith, and not by sight. Faith is the substance of the good things we hope for.* And the apostle *John*, very much to this purpose, observes, that *by faith we overcome the world.* 1 Joh. v. 4. *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

IT is this victorious principle of *faith*, which the apostle recommends to his son *Timothy* : and in exhorting him *to fight the good fight of faith*, exhorts him to encounter, with a firm and persevering resolution, all those difficulties, to which a faithful adherence to his duty might expose him. But though he may seem to speak the principle of *faith* in general ; yet the following exhortation, *to lay hold on eternal life*, and the observation, that *he was thereunto called, having professed a good profession before many witnesses*, determine his more special view to the faith of a christian. And it is certain, that no system of religion whatever furnishes so great advantages for *conquering the world*, both in its allurements and its terrors, as *faith* in that

SERM. that Jesus, *who brought life and immortality*

XV. *to light by his gospel.* Which clear view of
 *immortal life* I look upon as one of the chief reasons, why the apostle *John* speaks so triumphantly of the faith of a christian, immediately after the words just now quoted: *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*
 I Joh. v. 5.

ALL that I shall further observe for illustrating the exhortation in our text, is the beautiful energy of that expression, *lay hold on eternal life.* Whereby the apostle plainly signifies, that this is a *prize* which we should most eagerly reach after; that it deserves our most earnest concern of mind; and further, that while we are *fighting the good fight of faith*, we should encourage ourselves with the hope of the prize, and reach after it as belonging to us, since we are employed in that very way and course, in which God himself has taught us to expect it.

HAVING thus endeavoured to shew the meaning of the apostle's exhortation; I proceed now,

II. To consider the force of the motive by which it is recommended.

THIS is expressed in the following words, with an immediate relation to the prize of *eternal life*, just before mentioned: *whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

Now,

Now, that we may perceive the full SERM.
strength of this motive, which is thus dou- XV.
bly expressed ; it will be proper to enquire
a little, what is this *calling* and this *profession*,
to which the apostle here refers. And I
think, from the whole connexion or con-
text it is evident, that no other *calling* is
meant, than that by which all christians
receive their denomination of christians ; no
other *profession*, than *Timothy* made when he
took upon him the character of a disciple of
Christ.

It is needless to turn to the numerous
passages in the new testament, which speak
of christians in general as persons *called* ;
or to shew that thereby is meant, not on-
ly their having the gospel preached to them,
but their embracing that gospel, and thereby
shewing themselves to be *called* into the
society of God's people. And as to the
good profession, made *before many witnesses*,
which is immediately joined to the men-
tion of this *calling*, and made part of the
motive to *lay hold on eternal life* ; it is plain,
that it must either signifie that profession
of *Timothy's* faith, whereupon he was re-
ceived and acknowledged as a member of
Christ's church, or else something relating
to his office as a minister. Now I think it
is pretty evident, that there is not one in-
stance throughout the whole new testament,
or

SERM. or in the ^f antient times of ecclesiastical history; not one instance, I say, of a man's making a confession of his faith to qualify him for ordination as a minister, if he had been a professed disciple of Christ before. But it appears, that in antient times men were set apart to the ministerial office, upon its being known and acknowledged, that they were already christians; and not only so, but upon their being known and believed to be fit to instruct others in the doctrines and duties of christianity; for which reason there was no occasion to make an additional profession of faith in order to their being set apart to the ministry.

BUT besides this, the whole tenor of the context shews, as was before observed, that the words of our text itself were addressed to *Timothy* in the character of a christian, and not of a minister. For in many verses preceding the text, the apostle had been discoursing against the vices of *pride and envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds*; but especially against an eager *coveting* after riches. The apostle argues with great earnestness against the folly and danger of indulging this passion: and among other things says, ver. 9, 10. that *they who are resolved to be rich, who will be so at any rate, fall into temptation,*

^f None before the *Nicene* council.

temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish S E R M.
and hurtful lusts, which drown men in de- XV.
struction and perdition : for the love of mo-
ney is the root of all evil ; which while some
have coveted, they have been deluded a-
way from the faith, and pierced themselves
through with many sorrows. Upon this, in
ver 11. the apostle tells Timothy, that the
very contrary temper and conduct became
him as a man of God : and all the parti-
culars he recommends to his consideration,
under the character of a man of God, are
such as evidently belong to all christians in
general. But thou, O man of God, flee these
things ; and follow after righteousness, godli-
ness, faith, love, patience, meekness. After
which, in an immediate connexion, come
the words of our text : Fight the good fight
of faith ; lay hold on eternal life ; to the
which thou art also called, and hast professed
a good profession before many witnesses.

THIS connexion, I think, very plainly
shews, that the profession mentioned in the
text was that, which Timothy made as a
disciple of Christ, and upon which he was
received as a member of the church of
Christ. And this, together with some o-
ther passages of the new testament shews,
that in the primitive times, persons of the
greatest eminency thought it no shame or
disparagement, to make a publick profession
of their faith before many witnesses, in order

SERM. to their being admitted to the privileges of
XV. the christian church.

~ HAVING now seen what *profession* the apostle meant, and what was the *calling*, in remembrance of which he exhorted *Timothy* to *fight the good fight of faith*, and to *lay hold on eternal life*; it will be easy to shew, that the mention of these things was a proper motive to enforce the exhortation.

FOR if I have not only the gospel preached to me, that *gospel* whereby *life and immortality* are placed in a clear light; but have likewise through the grace of God been assisted to embrace it; and if I have taken upon me the voluntary *profession* of believing in Jesus Christ, who has in the Father's name made *the promise of eternal life* to all that obey him; if I have solemnly declared, that I believe in this Jesus as appointed of God to be my saviour, and that I resolve to obey him as appointed to be my ruler and lawgiver; if I have done this in obedience to the mind of Christ, and in pursuance of his appointment: then I am under the strongest obligations to *fight the good fight of faith*, to which his doctrine calls me forth; and am excited to reach after that *eternal life* which it places in prospect. I am moreover encouraged by the *profession* I have made, as well as excited: because I have all the reason in the world to believe, that if I am by my pro-
fession

The good fight of faith.

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feſſion as a chriſtian called forth to diffi- S E R M.
cult ſtruggles with fleſh and blood, and to XV.
much ſelf-denial in the preſent ſtate, in the
proſpect of an eternal life to come; then
by making good that profeſſion which I
have ſolemnly taken upon me, and going
on with reſolution to *fight the good fight of
faith*, I ſhall at length *attain the end of my
faith, even the ſalvation of my ſoul.*

T H I S is, in few words, the force of the
motive in the text. And now let us calm-
ly conſider, whether there is any thing in
it ſo contemptible as ſome are apt to re-
preſent it: or whether on the contrary it
is not a real advantage towards a ſteady
practice of godlineſs, to have once in our
lives taken upon us a ſolemn profeſſion of
faith, in obedience to the Son of God, who
has in the Father's name taught us the
whole of our duty, and ſet before us the
moſt encouraging hopes, to engage us to
perſevere in the practice.

T H E only pretence, upon which ſuch a
profeſſion can become the object of con-
tempt, muſt be its being needleſs, and that
a man may to the full as well answer every
deſireable end without it: for there is not
the leaſt foundation of ſuſpecting it to be
hurtful. It can ſurely do us no harm to
profefs ourſelves the diſciples of Chriſt,
unleſs he has taught us a falſe and immo-
ral doctrine, and ſet before us deluſive and

S E R M. dangerous motives : and as to this we are

XV. to satisfy our own judgments and consciences, before we take on us the profession. But if the doctrine which Christ has taught is good in its own nature ; and if his ministry was attended with such circumstances, as concurred with the goodness of the doctrine, to shew that he was sent of God : then surely it can be of no hurtful consequence for us to become his professed disciples ; but on the contrary it must be of importance that we obey him, and therein obey the divine authority by which he preached and acted.

BUT I shall wave for the present the thought of the importance of obeying Christ's divine mission, while I consider the prevailing objection of the present day, that there was no occasion of Christ's being sent at all, and consequently no occasion of our professing obedience to him now.

IT is incumbent on all those who make such an objection to prove, that not only they themselves, but all mankind, can as well discharge every duty which they owe to God or men, as effectually restrain every inordinate desire within their own minds, and order their conversation, their whole conversation, in all respects to as good, as virtuous, and as truly religious a purpose, without any help from the gospel

pel of Christ, as with it. This, I say, is SERM.
incumbent on them to prove. Instead of XV.
which, they are beholden to Christ's doc-
trine for the best part of that system of
morality, on account of which they so
much value themselves. And besides, they
seem not at all to consider, that how much
soever some studious men, and men of lei-
sure and ease, may be able to form sys-
tems of morality, and have them at their
fingers ends; the case is very different with
the vastly greater part of the world, who
are either busily employed in providing the
necessaries of life, or however, by some
means or other, are very little capable of
deducing all the obligations of moral du-
ty by a regular train of reasoning. But
besides, which is of great importance;
both the busy and the studious, the vul-
gar and even the exalted minds, are at-
tended with such snares in the course of
life; and mankind in general is so apt to
fall in with temptations to those measures,
which upon a serious reflexion their judg-
ments cannot approve; that nothing be-
sides prejudice can deny the exceeding
great usefulness and importance, of having
the great rules of duty set before us, and
recommended to us under the advantage of
a divine authority, and enforced with mo-
tives from the same authority. Nothing,
I say, but the force of prejudice can make

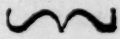
SERM. men deny this plain truth, considering the

XV. difficulties and snares, to which the wisest
 of us are exposed in our present condition.
 If therefore it is possible for us to be satisfied, that the most high has made known what he expects from us, and what we are to hope for upon our complying with his requirements ; this, instead of being useless, must be of vast advantage to us. And this is what the christian religion justly lays claim to. If indeed we are here deceived, the imposture is hurtful. But if the things recommended are really the mind of God ; then this religion is to us of very great importance. And if it cannot be proved to be an imposture : then the refusing to obey it, and even the refusal to make profession of it (since the very profession is one of the requirements of the religion itself) is a disowning of Christ as our saviour and ruler ; and gives the strongest ground of suspicion, that it proceeds not so much from the want of conviction of his divine authority, as the want of a sincere resolution to forsake all those evils, which the profession of faith in him would oblige us to forsake.

I SHALL conclude this discourse with an application to two sorts of persons whom it concerns.

I. To those who have taken on the *the* profession of christianity. m

You have reason to comfort yourselves,
 and

and to rejoice at the prospect of a happy S E R M.
end of your combat: *eternal life* is in fair XIV.
view before you: you are *called* to it; 
and have in the way of God's own ap-
pointment put in your claim for it. But
you are still to continue *fighting*; still to
press forward; that at last you may lay
bold on this glorious prize.

REMEMBER, that the words of our
text are an exhortation to this purpose, to
one who was not only an approved chris-
tian, but of an exalted station, and who
honourably filled that station. Even *Ti-*
mothy himself is exhorted by the apostle,
still to *fight the good fight of faith, that he*
might lay bold on eternal life. And in an-
other place the same apostle assures us, that
he himself *pressed towards the mark, for*
the prize of the high calling of God in Christ
Jesus; not as though he had already at-
tained, or were yet perfected. Phil. iii. 12, 14.

THEY therefore, who are by the chris-
tian religion *called unto eternal life*, that
is, they who have made a solemn *profes-*
sion of faith in Jesus Christ, may plainly see,
that by the profession of this religion they
are under strong obligations, to subdue every
corrupt affection, and to reform every vicious
practice; and at the same time, that their
profession itself yields them considerable
helps to this purpose. They can never
reflect upon what they did when they

SERM. took on themselves the profession of christianity, without seeing reason to be thankful, that they entered into engagements so much tending to their own true interest. And why should they not seriously attend to those engagements? Is it any advantage to the Almighty, our supreme governour, that we acknowledge ourselves to be his subjects? Or do we believe, concerning the Son of God, who is appointed of the Father to be our saviour and judge; do we believe, that any part of his happiness depends upon our owning him in these characters? Those things, which are required of us by virtue of Christ's religion, are they required of us for his sake, or for ours? For our own sake, most certainly: and to our own everlasting advantage it will turn, if we hearken to the voice that calls us, and suffer our engagements to have their proper effect upon us. But the matter depends upon our own choice. Even after we have taken upon us a voluntary profession of being Christ's disciples, it is incumbent on us to prove by our practice that we are so: for it is not merely *the calling him Lord, Lord, that will give us admittance into the kingdom of heaven.* If we will believe his own solemn declaration, we are assured, that *none shall enter that kingdom, who does not perform the will of his heavenly Father; Mat. vii. 21, 23.*

To

To all others, let their pretensions and professions be ever so plausible, he will say, SERM. XV.

I know you not, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. ~~~~~

IT is certain, that this profession of christianity will enhance our condemnation, if it does not, according to its genuine tendency, promote our happiness. But instead of presenting any circumstances of terror, I would choose to encourage all those who have *professed the good profession*; intreating them to consider, that by the religion they have professed they are *called unto eternal life*, as well as unto the *conflicts*, which in this present state are necessary in the way towards it. Does the doctrine of Christ teach you self-denial; does it teach you *to bear your cross*? And does it not at the same time assure you, that this difficult way is the way to a *crown of glory*, a *never-fading crown of glory*? As to the difficulties themselves; are there any such, as are insuperable to the grace of God, which is sure to attend you while you perform the part required of you? And is not *eternal life* a sufficient reward for all your labour and suffering? Who would not deny himself many desirable enjoyments, under the assurance of so happy a consequence? And who can entertain a doubt of this happy consequence, if he has but attentively weighed the promises
of

SERM. of the gospel, and the evidence of divine
XV. authority with which they are attended?

Let these thoughts reconcile us to the difficulties of the *combat*, in which as christians we are engaged; the combat with corrupt affections of our own, and perverse oppositions from our great adversary and his agents: and let us frequently reflect upon our engagements, in order to the quickening of our resolution.

II. To those who have not taken on them the christian profession.

By your declining it hitherto, it seems as if you were either ashamed of it, or thought it of no importance.

If you are ashamed of it; what reason can you give, why Christ should not hereafter be *ashamed of you*?

If you think it of no importance to you; how do you think it was of importance to so eminent a christian as *Timothy*? Yet the argument, by which the apostle in our text inforces upon him the exhortation to *fight the good fight of faith*, is because he *had professed a good profession before many witnesses*. Was this of advantage to him? and can it be of no advantage to you? Was it useful to an evangelist, to be put in mind, that he had voluntarily taken upon him a solemn *profession* of christianity? Did the apostle believe, that the putting him in mind of this might be the means

means of quickening him to a greater vi- SERM.
gour in *fighting the good fight of faith?* XV.

And are you so absolutely perfect, that such solemn remembrances can be of no service to you? How do you hereby arraign the wisdom and the goodness of your Lord and master; who in much condescension to our weakness ordained a few positive institutions, on purpose to put us in mind of our duty, and excite us to the practice of it? And when our blessed Lord has ordained two institutions; will you pretend to say, that you will obey his authority in the one, but not in the other? He requires, that you should in both of them voluntarily, as your own act and deed, recognize his authority over you, and his right to your best services. And what is your refusal to do this, in either of these respects, better than trampling upon his authority, and scorning to submit to what he ordained with a kind intention towards yourselves?

I SPEAK to those, who acknowledge that Christ has ordained both those institutions which go by his name, and that they are both to be submitted to as our own personal act and deed. If you have not received this conviction; consult the new testament carefully again, and read it with a sincere resolution to comply with whatever shall appear to be there required by your
Lord

SERM. Lord and saviour: and let not small and

XV. trifling objections serve for an excuse, if your
 ~~~~~ minds are strongly inclined to believe there  
 is an obligation upon you. For this you  
 may depend upon as a maxim, and I doubt  
 not, you see and follow it in other affairs;  
 that when strength of argument appears on  
 one side, and only some scruples on the other,  
 he who will sit still, and do nothing of im-  
 portance, till all his little scruples are remov-  
 ed, will never do any thing of importance as  
 long as he lives. Is it of importance, that  
 we *fight the good fight of faith*; of as much  
 importance as is the prize of *eternal life*?  
 And is it of no importance to take on us,  
 at the command of Christ, those engage-  
 ments which shall rationally excite us to it?

THEY who decline the solemn profession  
 of christianity do not consider what advan-  
 tages they lose, by standing at a distance :  
 and they are very much deceived, if in any  
 respect they imagine themselves to be gain-  
 ers. They are not, by declining the christian  
 profession, excused from the obligation to  
 any one duty, which the law of their na-  
 ture binds upon them ; and they lose very  
 great advantages which the christian religion  
 offers to them. If it requires some things  
 of us, arising from our condition as sinful  
 creatures, which the mere reasonings of our  
 own minds without revelation could not  
 have suggested to us ; it makes an abundant  
 recom-



recompence, by the clear display of the SERM.  
whole mind of God concerning us, both XV.  
with regard to what he expects from us,   
and what we may hope for from his sovereign goodness. And it is in vain to deny, that by the voluntary profession of this religion we are in a fairer prospect of a regular discharge of our duty, and of comfort in that regular course, than without such a profession. While men stand at a distance, and do not take engagements upon them, it is evident they are apt to think themselves excused from that strict guard over their actions, which they should otherwise be engaged to. And is this any real advantage? Or does it upon reflexion yield any real comfort? And what if a great number of those, who have taken voluntary engagements upon themselves, do fail of making them good? Is that the fault of the religion they profess; or do they fall short ever the more, because they have engaged to go forward and to improve in that which is good? No: this is not the case. The truth is, that men have either taken on them the engagement without designing to make it good; or else they have not attended as they ought to what they have been doing. For if they had; they would have found the advantage of the covenant into which they had entered.

I WILL not therefore be ashamed or  
afraid



SERM. afraid to exhort all those who never have

XV. *professed the good profession*, that they would do it without delay, and look upon it as the wisest and best action of their lives.

Do you in earnest believe the doctrine of a future state? Do you think, that you are in the present state obliged *to fight the good fight of faith*, subduing and mortifying corrupt affections, in the prospect of a day of retribution? Are you in earnest desirous *to lay hold on eternal life*? Or are you, for the sake of this world's enjoyments, indifferent towards it? If you are in earnest; then, as the doctrine of Christ gives you the clearest and surest prospect of supreme felicity, and the sincere embracing and professing of this doctrine gives you a title to all the glorious hopes it sets before you; you will not be ashamed to make this *profession* in that way, whatsoever it be, which you believe is most agreeable to the mind of Christ himself.

THERE is indeed in this affair something of a humbling and mortifying nature. And especially to those, who have a high opinion of their own knowledge and goodness, it must be a great mortification, to profess the hope of happiness through the mediation of Christ, and particularly by means of his <sup>e</sup> death. This was *to the antient Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*

<sup>e</sup> See Serm. xi. latter end.

*The good fight of faith.*

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*ness.* And many of those, who profess to be- SERM.  
lieve the doctrine of Christ's mediation, re- XV.  
coil very much at the thought of professing  
discipleship to Christ by submitting to posi-  
tive ordinances. I cannot now enter into a  
particular answer to these objections. Let  
every one consult the new testament and  
satisfy his own mind. I only insist on this:  
that if the doctrine of Christ be true and  
of importance to us ; if he requires our  
*profession of it*, and that profession has a  
tendency to assist us in practising the du-  
ties it requires: then whatever is the man-  
ner, wherein Christ himself would have us  
take up this *profession*, there is no room  
for our objecting against it.



S E R-



## S E R M O N XVI.

The christian's obligation to study  
the gospel.

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COL. iii. 16.

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you  
richly in all wisdom; teaching  
and admonishing one another in  
psalms and hymns and spiritual  
songs, singing with grace in your  
hearts to the Lord.*

**T**H E R E is a great likeness between  
this exhortation of St. Paul to the  
Colossians, and that of the same apostle to  
the Ephesians, chap. v. 18, 19. *Be not drunk  
with wine, wherein is excess; but be ye filled  
with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in  
psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing  
and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.*  
And the likeness of the thoughts will ap-  
pear the more clearly, if we add to each  
text the verse which immediately follows.

To the *Ephesians* it is thus: *Giving thanks* SERM. always for all things unto God even the Fa- XVI. ther, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ~~~~~

To the *Colossians* thus: *And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks to God even the Father by him.* From this likeness therefore of the apostle's thoughts in both places, it is natural to expect, that the one passage may help to explain the other.

Now whatsoever is the distinct meaning of the *psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*, which the *Colossians* are exhorted to sing with grace in their hearts to the Lord, and in which the *Ephesians* are exhorted to make melody in their hearts to the Lord; there is good reason to believe they were such, as both the one and the other were to expect from the immediate operations of the divine Spirit. For in the epistle to the *Ephesians* there is an immediate connection between the exhortation to be filled with the Spirit, and to speak in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs: this was the way, in which they were to express and signify to each other the fulness of their minds, under the influence of the Spirit. And though our text does not directly speak of the Spirit; yet a little care in comparing it with other passages in the new testament will shew,

C c

that



SERM. that such immediate influence of the Spirit  
XVI. is implied.

~~~~~ It will appear, I say, that the exhortation to the *Colossians*, to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom, meant much the same thing, as that to the *Ephesians*, to be filled with the Spirit. For the same apostle, who wrote these two epistles, tells the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10. when he is professedly discoursing of the gifts of the Spirit; that to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom: to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecie; to another the discerning of Spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. The first among all these gifts is said to be the word of wisdom by the Spirit; an expression very much like to that in the text, wherein the *Colossians* are exhorted to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom. And it will appear still much more likely that the apostle had reference to this, when 'tis compared with the parallel text, where the *Ephesians* are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit, just before they are exhorted to speak to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; as the *Colossians* in our text are

are exhorted *to let the word of Christ dwell* S E R M.
in them richly in all wisdom, just before they XVI.
 are exhorted *to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.* ~~~~~

Now whatever difficulty there is in these things, it is solved by this thought: that even the extraordinary gifts of which we have been speaking, though they were wrought by one and the same Spirit, which divideth to every man severally as he will, (1 Cor. xii. 11.) yet were really put within the reach of the persons to whom the exhortations were directed; so that they might be sure of receiving those extraordinary operations of the Spirit, if they exerted themselves in a proper manner in seeking after them. This being supposed: it was no way absurd for the apostle to exhort the *Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit*; or to exhort the *Colossians to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom*; though we have already seen, from what this apostle writes to the *Corinthians*, that *the word of wisdom*, according to his own account of it, was one of the special gifts of the Spirit. And, no doubt, the christians, to whom these exhortations were directed, knew that God had put it in their power to secure them to themselves, if they shewed an earnest desire of them, and at the same time conformed their hearts and lives to the direc-

SERM. tions of the same Spirit in the scheme of
 XVI. the christian doctrine. Accordingly we
 ~~~~~ find, that in the latter end of the xiith  
 chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians*,  
 he exhorts them to *covet earnestly the best  
 gifts* : which *coveting*, in a case, where  
 men are not only allowed, but by proper  
 authority advised and exhorted to *covet*,  
 naturally implies the hope of obtaining.

THUS much may serve to shew in general, that the words of our text relate to what we call the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit : which yet were placed within the reach of the persons who were exhorted to exercise them ; for otherwise the exhortation itself would have been in vain.

BUT to speak more particularly. By *the rich indwelling of the word of Christ in all wisdom*, I understand the possessing the mind, by frequent meditation, with a strong sense of the whole scheme of Christ's doctrine ; so as to make the thought of that wisdom and goodness, which shine forth therein, habitual and delightful, and to dispose the mind to an abundant measure of joy and thankfulness.

THERE can, I think, be no difficulty in acknowledging, that by *the word of Christ* is meant the scheme of his doctrine. And when christians are exhorted to let this *dwell in them* ; nothing less can be meant, than that they should make themselves

selves intimately and thoroughly acquainted with it. Nay further, the apostle seems to mean, that this *word of Christ* should be within them the principle, which should guide their actions and course of life ; especially when he exhorts them to *let it dwell richly in them*.

SERM.  
 XVI.

WHEN the exhortation is, that *the word of Christ may dwell within christians in all the extent of its wisdom* ; the meaning must be, that they should not content themselves with a slight knowledge of its views : but inasmuch as it is that dispensation of the divine mind and counsel, relating to their duty and happiness, which contains in it displays of the highest wisdom, such as tend most to the ennobling of their minds, and preparing them for the most compleat happiness which creatures of their rank are capable of ; they should endeavour to take in as much of the compass of it as they are able. And though *the word of wisdom*, 1 Cor. xii. 8. does probably mean some extraordinary gift, confined to persons of a superior character ; yet we find the apostle prays for the whole church of the *Ephesians*, chap. i. 16---19. *that God would grant to them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him* ; with other phrases of much like import to that in our text, relating to the whole scheme of christianity. That the *Colossians* are



SERM. in our text exhorted to take in the utmost

XVI. compass of this *wisdom* that they can, is very evident; because in the next words they are exhorted to employ it *in teaching and admonishing one another*. And that the frequent and intimate acquaintance with it which he recommends should be attended with delight and thankfulness, is plainly seen by the manner in which the inward sense of it should be expressed; *in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in the heart to the Lord*: for whatever diversity there is between *psalms* and *hymns* and *spiritual songs*, there can be no doubt, that the *singing* of them was designed to be attended with joy and delight; and accordingly the apostle exhorts to sing them *with grace*, ἐν χάριτι, which word is often used to signify *thanks*, and which might very well have been rendered so in this place.

By *psalms* may be understood any religious composures for singing, in concert with instruments or without. *Hymns* are properly such compositions, whose subject is the praising of God. And when the apostle mentions *spiritual songs*, he plainly signifies they should be quite of a different nature from those which were used in the heathen temples, tending to promote drunkenness and lewdness. It is not easy at this distance of time to assign the exact difference between these three kinds of com-

composition for *singing*, which the apostle S E R M. mentions: nor does it appear to be very XVI. necessary. It is more to our purpose to observe; that in them all the christians were not only to *sing* and *make melody in their hearts*, but with their voices too; otherwise how should they *teach and admonish one another*; which yet they are required to do in these *psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*. And herein the apostle speaks agreeably to what he wrote to the *Corinthians*, 1 ep. xiv. 15. where he is advising all those who had spiritual gifts to exercise them to the purpose of *edification* and usefulness, by ordering it so as to be well understood. *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: and I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also*. He would not have those who publicly prayed and sung under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to pray or sing otherwise than might be understood by the people for their edification. So in our text; he would have the *psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*, which the christians of his time sung, whether in public, or out of the fulness of their hearts in private conversation with each other, to be so ordered, as might tend to each others instruction and establishment in that

SERM. *word of Christ, which he would have to*  
 XVI. *dwell richly within them in all wisdom.*

~ THUS I have endeavoured in some measure to explain the meaning of this difficult text. Let us now see of what use it may be to us in the present day.

SOME may be ready to imagine, that it can no way belong to us, because we do not pretend to have the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or any of those extraordinary gifts, to which the apostle in the text manifestly refers. But this plea will by no means excuse us from performing the substance of all those things, which the *Colossians* in our text are exhorted to perform ; especially when we remember, that those extraordinary gifts themselves, as well as what related to the use and exercise of them, were in some sort placed within the reach of those, who were exhorted to attain and improve them. The exhortations are directed to the *Colossians* under the character of christians ; as appears by the preceding verses, with which this text is immediately connected : where they are required, *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering ; and above all things to put on love, which is the bond of perfectness ; and to let the peace of God rule in their hearts, as being thereunto called*  
 by



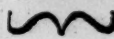
*by the gospel.* Now all persons of this cha-  
 racter are surely obliged to endeavour, *that*  
*the word of Christ may dwell richly in them*  
*in all wisdom*; to attain as much of that  
*wisdom* as they can; to get as large a view  
 of the divine counsels in the affair of re-  
 demption, as they are able, if they may  
 not be allowed to expect those degrees,  
 which were attained by the primitive chri-  
 stians, under the Spirit's immediate guid-  
 ance.

MOREOVER it becomes all christians, to  
 possess themselves with such a comprehen-  
 sive view of the scheme of Christ's doc-  
 trine, by frequently and delightfully me-  
 ditating upon it, as will naturally dispose  
 them to speak to the praise of God and the  
 Redeemer, to the instruction and establish-  
 ment of those with whom they converse.  
 And whether any of us can or cannot on a  
 sudden break forth into sublime discourses  
 of this kind, such as those who were un-  
 der the immediate influence of the Spirit  
*sung forth* in the public assemblies in the  
 primitive times: yet we can, if it be not  
 our own fault, attain such a plentiful ac-  
 quaintance with the christian doctrine, as  
 shall enable us upon any occasion to *teach*  
*and admonish* those, who we see stand in  
 need of instruction and admonition: we  
 can possess our minds with such a strong sense  
 of the excellency of that holy doctrine, as  
 shall



SERMON. shall dispose us, upon proper occasions, to

XVI. express with joy and *thankfulness* our high esteem of it, to the glory of its author, and the spiritual advantage of those with whom we converse. If we did only suffer *the word of Christ to dwell in us* in such manner as becomes our christian character, and as we are by our very profession of christianity obliged to ; we should be so far from being ashamed or backward in this respect, that we should joyfully take all proper occasions for this purpose. Nay further, notwithstanding that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in the primitive age seem to have answered fully the end for which such gifts were afforded, so that there is no need of extraordinary operations in these latter days, to prove the truth and divine authority of the christian religion : yet the ceasing of these extraordinary operations does not seem to be so much owing to their being now become unnecessary, as to the carelessness of professed christians, and their want of zealous desires and endeavours to come up to the full extent of their own character as christians. This however is certain : that if all professed christians did exercise true pains, to have *the word of Christ dwell richly in them in all wisdom* ; if they searched diligently to know the mind of God in every part of the christian scheme ; if they did this with a real view to glorifie that God, who

who has in the gospel made such plentiful SERM.  
provision for their future happiness and their XVI.  
present comfort; if they frequently medi-   
tated upon these things, so as to excite sen-  
timents of delight and thankfulness in their  
own minds: it would be impossible there  
should be so very great a difference, between  
the disposition of the generality of christians  
at this day, and that which appears to have  
prevailed in the primitive age.

AND can any christian pretend, that this  
labour and diligence in searching the mind of  
God, and this delight in it, and thankfulness  
for it, as set forth in the christian scheme, do  
not become him, or are not required of him  
as a christian? Does it become us to sit  
down content with a little superficial know-  
ledge: or, will this serve our turn, if it  
shall appear at the great day of account,  
that it was in our power to have gained  
a much higher degree, and therewith to  
have done abundantly more good than we  
did? It will not be sufficient to say, that  
we did in general believe the christian doc-  
trine, and had some regard to it in the  
course of our actions; if it shall appear,  
that by the abilities of our minds and the  
circumstances of our affairs it was in our  
power to have gained a more comprehen-  
sive knowledge of the counsel of God, and  
therewith to have done abundance of good;  
if it shall appear, that we might have  
gained

SERM. gained such a knowledge as would have

XVI. rendered us useful, in removing objections  
 against the christian doctrine, in the mouths  
 of infidels; in rectifying the mistakes of  
 sincere christians, and thereby bettering  
 their conduct; in banishing superstitious  
 apprehensions from the minds of good peo-  
 ple, arising from their wrong notions of  
 some parts of the christian doctrine, and  
 thereby providing for the comfort of their  
 lives, and for their much greater usefulness  
 in the remaining part of their time. If it  
 shall hereafter appear, that it was in our  
 power to have contributed to all these ex-  
 cellent purposes, by only exercising greater  
 diligence to *let the word of Christ dwell in*  
*us richly in all wisdom*; we shall be con-  
 demned in our own consciences for falling  
 short, even though we should escape the  
 condemnation of those, who wholly rejected  
 the gospel, and lived in a habitual contempt  
 of it.

THERE is one circumstance in the pre-  
 sent state of christianity, which should make  
 all serious christians the more willingly  
 comply with the apostle's exhortation in the  
 text. And that is, the number of those  
 who diligently labour to bring the whole  
 scheme of christianity into contempt. This,  
 I say, should make all those, who do in  
 earnest believe *the word of Christ*, to exercise  
 all diligence, that it may *dwell richly within*  
*them*



*them in all wisdom.* For in such a time, S E R M. when the ridiculing of the christian doctrine XVI. is become fashionable, and accounted a part of polite breeding, there is no room to be indifferent; because a coolness, or seeming compliance for the sake of civility, may endanger our own steadiness; besides the advantage which our adversaries will gain, by our only seeming to betray the cause we have professed to espouse. It is indeed now come to that point, that we must either take care *to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly*, or else make that guest intirely quit its habitation, if ever it did dwell within us. We must either strive to attain the ability and the readiness *to teach and admonish others*; or else be in danger of losing such impressions of the christian doctrine, as should duly influence ourselves.

If therefore we think the exhortation in our text impracticable, or unsuitable to the present times, because the extraordinary operations of the Spirit have long since ceased; let us seriously ask our own hearts, whether we are willing wholly to lose that *word of Christ*, which we do not desire should *dwell in us richly in all wisdom*. If we can content ourselves without striving after a large and comprehensive view of the christian doctrine, merely because we do not expect to shine after such a manner



SERM. manner with spiritual gifts, as the primitive christians did; we are really in danger of losing our christianity entirely. We should rather resolve; that since it certainly becomes all christians, in every age, to desire and endeavour, that *the word of Christ may dwell in them richly in all wisdom*; therefore we will, according to our best abilities and means afforded, labour to perform that in the ordinary way, which the primitive christians, by the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, did in an extraordinary manner. And such a disposition as this, kept up in our minds, will enable us to make unspeakable advances in our knowledge of the mind of God, and in *thankfulness* for it. It will wear off that unbecoming fearfulness of entering into any religious conversation, which so visibly attends some professed christians; and yet it will never prompt any man to expose his religion to contempt, by thrusting in discourse upon improper occasions. They who cultivate this disposition, out of a sincere respect to the doctrine of Christ, and a single view to the glory of God, will be taught effectually by that very doctrine, to lay aside the vain glory of gaining admiration to themselves. Their zeal will be unaffected, and will appear to be so, as it did in the primitive christians: and it is impossible, that the united endeavours of many  
to

to this purpose should fail of having some S E R M.  
 proportionable success. If the members in XVI.  
 general of any one christian society could  
 be prevailed on to exercise this diligence,  
 their zeal would certainly warm some of  
 those with whom they converse, and dis-  
 pose them to do the like : and it must be  
 by such means as these, if at all, that chris-  
 tianity must ever rise out of that reproch  
 and contempt, into which the coolness and  
 indifference of its professed friends has suf-  
 fered it to fall.

T H E R E is surely a happy medium,  
 between the officious forwardness of an  
 empty vain-glorious mind, and the cold-  
 ness and backwardness of one who is a-  
 shamed of his profession : and we might  
 certainly find out this happy medium, if it  
 were not our own fault ; that is, if we did  
 in earnest exercise our judgments in seeking  
 after it. We should some way or other be  
 useful, in *teaching and admonishing one an-*  
*other, if the word of Christ did dwell in us*  
*richly in all wisdom*, and if the prevailing  
 bent of our affections were not some other  
 way. But if our own hearts are not affect-  
 ed with *thankfulness* to God, for his great  
 goodness and wisdom manifested in the gos-  
 pel ; it is impossible we should shew forth  
 that *thankfulness* which should be useful to  
 others. If either the cares or the pleasures  
 of this life engross our minds, they will  
 effectually prevent *the word of Christ from*  
*dwelling*

SERM. *dwelling in us richly in all wisdom*; and consequently will prevent our expressing that *thankfulness* to God, which becomes us in the course of our conversation: for this can never be decently done by any other than those, who have real *grace*, i.e. sincere thankfulness, *in their hearts*.

Now it is not to be expected we should ever be sincerely *thankful* for any scheme of doctrine, which does not, according to the apostle's expression, *dwelling richly in our minds in the wisdom of it*. My chief business therefore is to exhort you to take care about this. And I wish I could persuade all that hear me, to possess their minds with as large and comprehensive a knowledge of the christian religion, as they are capable of receiving; and that they would by frequent meditation make the substance of it familiar to them. I wish that such as never yet saw any beauty in it, or foundation for thankfulness, would study it with less prejudice; and that all those, who have ever made profession of it, would enquire more diligently into the several parts of it than hitherto they have done, and not content themselves with general and superficial thoughts about it. For this purpose it will be necessary to converse much with the new testament itself, and to take our views from thence, and not from the schemes which uninspired men have built upon it, how much soever we may



may reverence them for their wisdom and piety. They were to judge for themselves, and to help their brethren as well as they could : so are we to judge for ourselves, and not to take them for authoritative guides. If they have in most things judged rightly of the christian religion, and yet have in some things given such an account, as appears to us inconsistent with it, or such as we cannot reconcile to the perfections of that being, from whom that religion professes to be derived ; we should not, from our opinion of their wisdom or goodness, take that upon trust from them, which sits uneasie upon our own minds. For this will in the end shake us from our stability, and effectually check that *thankfulness*, which becomes us in our meditations. There must be a full satisfaction in the mind, before *the word of Christ* can be said to dwell in us richly in all wisdom. And if there be any considerable objections against the scheme, or doubts about the wisdom of it in our minds ; there can be no grace or thankfulness in our hearts for it, no melody or harmony. Our business is therefore, to get all the helps we can, by conversing with those who we believe can give us the best assistance : and if we fail of receiving satisfaction from one, it will be proper to have recourse to others, and to leave no means untried, that may probably tend to our full satisfaction. But after all our

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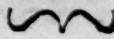
appli-



SERM. application to others, our chief recourse

XVI. must be to our own meditations upon the  
 ~~~~~ several parts of the christian doctrine, as  
 contained in the new testament, comparing
 one part with another : by which means a
 person of a common capacity may make
 large advances in the knowledge of the
 christian scheme, and come to see those
 proofs of divine *wisdom* in it, which shall
 escape men of a brighter genius, who study
 with less application, or less real desire of
 profiting.

BUT there is one caution necessary, in
 this close study of the christian religion
 which I am recommending : and the very
 end for which it is recommended shews
 the necessity of it. We are exhorted
 to study the christian doctrine, with the
 view to its *dwelling richly in us in all wis-*
dom ; and further with the view of being
 useful to others by expressing a becoming
thankfulness to God. It is very needful
 therefore, that we so study, as neither to
 pride ourselves in any discoveries which we
 imagine we make ; nor to condemn others,
 who act according to the best of their light,
 for not seeing as we do. That there may
 be an abuse of real light and knowledge
 this way, appears from the many cautions
 given by *St. Paul* about the extraordinary
 gifts themselves, and particularly about
knowledge, 1 Cor. viii. 1. where the *Corin-*
thians are put in mind, that *knowledge puff-*
eth

eth up, but love edifieth. Which caution is SERM.
 applied by the apostle to the differing sen- XVI.
 timents of *the weak and the strong* christians, 
 about the eating or not eating things
 offered to idols. And the substance of his
 advice in that affair, which is applicable to
 many others, is contained in verse 9. *Take*
heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours
become a stumbling block to the weak : and in
 ver. 12. *But when ye so sin against the bre-*
thren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin
against Christ. Now all this is said by the
 apostle with regard to a case, wherein the
 stronger christians were fully convinced,
 and upon good grounds, that they had from
 the scheme of the gospel a liberty to do
 that, which their weaker brethren could
 not believe was any way allowable. In
 like manner, a man may by close medita-
 tion discover, that several things are com-
 prehended in the scheme of the christian
 doctrine, which if he should mention in a
 dictating imperious way to some christians,
 upbraiding their ignorance for not seeing
 them, they would, instead of being con-
 vinced, entertain an ill opinion of him who
 pretended to make the discovery : and if
 many should go on in that manner, it might
 prove such a stumbling block to weak chris-
 tians, as to endanger their casting off the
 christian profession. Yet in the very same
 cases, if any thing, not usually known or
 believed, be by diligent meditation found

SERM. to be the mind of God contained in the
 XVI. christian scheme ; if we believe it to be of
 importance to be known and observed ; if
 in particular we believe it tends to the
 glory of God, in advancing mens esteem
 of his wisdom in the constitution of the
 gospel, (and many such things there may
 be, which at the first mention some
 christians would think to be quite incon-
 sistent with it) let it be laid even before a
 weak christian, *in a spirit of meekness*, and
 the evidences set before him in such a
 manner as shall shew he is not insulted ;
 and much more light will be conveyed,
 than can be in any other way ; and the
 design of the apostle will be answered, in
 exciting *thankfulness* for the gospel in the
 hearts of christians. And since all our dis-
 coveries of the *wisdom* of divine counsel do
 in their genuine tendency excite *thankful-
 ness* in our own hearts ; why should we
 not so order our communicating them to
 others, as to excite the same *thankfulness* in
 them ? Why should that, which calls for
 reverent affection to the blessed God from
 us, be so ordered by our pride, or con-
 tempt of our brethren, as to excite unbe-
 coming passions in them, and to give them
 doubts concerning the truth or real good-
 ness of the christian religion, instead of
 raising their esteem of it ?

*Let therefore the word of Christ dwell
 richly in us, in that wisdom, in which it
 more*

more especially glories ; that is, in love and S E R M.
benevolence ; in the earnest desire and zea- XVI.
lous endeavour to do real good to each other. Let us in this manner testify our
thankfulness to God for his great love to us
all. And if we have already seen, as I
doubt not every considerate christian has
seen, strong evidences of *the wisdom of God*
in the scheme of our salvation through
Jesus Christ ; if we have, upon those views
which we have already taken, seen a glory,
arising from the combination of that purity
and rectitude, that goodness and loving-
kindness, that perfect knowledge of our
miserable condition through sin, and gra-
cious regard to it, which shine through the
gospel dispensation : let us make no doubt,
that by a closer consideration of the same
scheme, and a more habitual application
of our minds to it, we shall discover more
glories and beauties than ever we have yet
seen. It is that *wisdom* of divine counsel,
which the apostle *Peter* assures us, even
the angels desire to pry into. 1 Pet. i. 12.
And St. *Paul* observes, Eph. iii. 10. *that*
unto the principalities and powers in heavenly
places is now made known by the church (i. e.
by means of God's gracious discoveries to the
church) *the manifold wisdom of God.* Is it
not worth our while then, to labour, that
this *word of Christ may dwell richly in our*
minds, in all those degrees of *wisdom* which
we are capable of apprehending ? Are we

S E R M. more deep-sighted than those pure intel-

XVI. lectual beings? Or are the objects of sense, with which we converse in this lower world, better worth our attention, than the counsels of *divine wisdom*, relating to our present duty, and our eternal happiness? Do we think, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that glorious being, *to whom all the principalities and powers in heaven are subject*, upon an errand of little importance? Or, when the importance is chiefly to ourselves; shall we be the only rational beings unconcerned to gain an intimate acquaintance with it? Is there nothing desirable in the prospect of *making melody in our hearts to the Lord*, by instructing and comforting our brethren, out of that principle of *grace* or *thankfulness*, which so well becomes us? We may depend upon it, that the better we digest the doctrine of Christ in our minds, and the more habitually we bear a *thankful* sense of it upon our hearts, the more will there be of *melody* in our discourse about it, the more easily shall we dispose others to obey it; and consequently we shall contribute the more to the eternal welfare of those with whom we converse. And how much this becomes our character as christians, I shall leave yourselves to determine.

T H E E N D.

De locorum sanctitate.

ORATIO
ANNIVERSARIA

ad coetum

THEOLOGORUM

in

BIBLIOTHECA GUILIELMIANA

a. d. x. cal. Junías MDCCXXXIV

habita

a JOSEPHO BURROUGHS.

De locorum sanctitate.

ESA. LXVI. I, 2, 3.

Sic dicit Jehova : coelum ipsum meum solium est, et terra meorum pedum scabellum : ubinam domus est quam vos mihi construistis, aut ubinam meae requietis locus? Atqui omnia ista fecit manus mea, et per eam existunt omnia, inquit Jehova : sed hunc ego respiciam, videlicet pauperem et contritum spiritu, ac trepidantem ad verbum meum. Qui mactat bovem, perinde est ac si hominem interficeret ; qui agnum immolat, ac si canem jugularet ; qui munus offert, perinde ac si suillum sanguinem ; qui thus adolet, perinde

De locorum sanctitate.

*inde ac si benediceret idolo :
isti etenim elegerunt vias suas,
et inquinamentis suis eorum ani-
mus delectatur.*

EA res antiquis Judaeis vituperationi fuit, verbisque jam recitatis eam Deus optimus maximus ipsis exprobrat ; quòd quum de templo Jehovae gloriarentur, et in caeremoniis observandis essent diligentissimi, finem tamen quò referri omnes locos sacros omnesque caeremonias oporteret, prorsus negligerent. Aedem illam, quae numinis colendi causa Hierosolymis fuerat extructa, non ignorabant Jehovam pro sua domo agnovisse. Quoniam igitur Jehova se apud ipsos habitare significaverat, Judaei peculiarem se illum habere concludebant : aequumque judicabant, ut regi suo (namque a regis nomine inter illos Jehova versabatur) honorem aliquem atque cultum tribuerent. At quoniam interiorem illam animi reverentiam non adhibebant, quae apud Deum maximi est momenti atque ponderis ; declarant ea verba a quibus sum exorsus, templum ipsum, omnemque illum magnificum caeremoniarum apparatus, in contemptione ac despicientia a Deo esse habita. Significat porro ipse Jehova, nullam aedem a mortalibus condi-

tam

tam revera se esse dignam ; neque totum coelorum ambitum nimis esse amplum qui tanti regis esset solium ; de universa autem terra loquitur quasi de pedis scabello ; coelumque ipsum et terram significat a se fuisse condita, ideoque infinitis modis ipso conditore esse inferiora. Eam tamen cellissimam conditoris dignitatem non ideo nominat, quasi quidquam a se conditum despiceret, praesertim quasi vellet aliquem sincerum sui cultorem deterrere. Disertis enim verbis continuò declarat, illum hominem, quocumque esset in loco aut quacumque conditione, se velle respicere, qui praeceptis suis animo sincero obtemperaret. Interea iis denunciat, qui interiori illa reverentia carerent, quique sanctissimae suae voluntati non obedientes suas sibi vivendi rationes elegissent, nihilo magis velle se eos respicere, quum illum cultum sibi adhiberent, quem ipse in mandatis dederat, quàm si vetita et maximè detestabilia patrarent. Hoc enim indicat Jehova, quum ait ; qui mactaret bovem, perinde ipsi fore acceptum, ac si hominem occidisset ; qui agnum immolaret, aliudve quodvis sacrificium faceret, ac si canem jugulasset, aut suillum sanguinem obtulisset, quod utrumque animantis genus in detestandis erat sacrificioque indignis ; quique thus adoleret, non alio in numero fore, quam si crimen idololatriae commisisset.

Hæc

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HAEC omnia manifestum est propterea a Deo denunciari, quod eos animo esse improbo vitaeque ratione impura videret, qui de templo, Jehovae praesentia, atque apud eos commoratione, insolenter adeo se jactarent. Inde est, quod de quavis aede terrestri non sine contemptione loquatur; quodque coelum sibi habitandi causa se elegisse dicat; id quod aliàs saepissime in sacro codice indicatur. Haec igitur nulla ratione cum dictis illis pugnant, in quibus loca terrena, ubi Deus aliquam sui copiam praebere fuisset dignatus, summo cum honore in mentionem veniunt, ac nonnumquam Dei domicilia et requietis loca nuncupantur. Dubitari enim nequit, pios homines propterea versus locum aliquem Deum coluisse, quod aut Deus ibi habitare crederetur, aut saltem per aliquod praesentiae suae signum illo in loco nonnumquam apparuisset. Hinc Moses versus rubum ardentem; Israelitae postea, ex ipsius Jehovae mandato, versus montem Sinai, deinde etiam versus tabernaculum atque templum, Jehovah venerati sunt: nullamque aliam ob causam fieri potuit, ut quivis locus terrenus Dei domicilium appellaretur. Hinc igitur Jacobus etiam de loco illo, in quo per somnum Deus ipsi aliquam sui copiam fecerat, dicere non verebatur: *Certè est Jehova in hoc loco, at ego nesciveram: quàm terribilis est hic locus!*

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v

cus! non alius est quam domus Dei et porta coeli!

DE honore igitur locis tribuendo dicturus, nequeo ordine quicquam de locis terrestribus prius dicere, quàm ex sacro codice monstraverim, Deum singulari quadam ratione in coelo habitare; idque solum in causa fuisse, cur ad coelum conversi pii homines ipsum adoraverint. Dein locos illos terrestres, in quibus Deus aliquam sui copiam ante natum Christum prae-buit, ex Dei ipsius mente permagno honore habitos fuisse, ostendam. Tum quid de reverentia locis debita libri novi instrumenti doceant, diligenter inquiram; quidque fuerit in causa, cur hac in re tantum differant quae post Christum natum, ab iis quae ante ipsius adventum, a Deo sunt hominibus tradita. Haec sunt potissimum, de quibus verba sum facturus. Atque haec dicendi occasionem de iis Dei ipsius verbis sumere volui, quae mentis vitaeque sanctimoniam ipsi multo magis placere, quàm ullam quamcumque in rebus exterioribus religionis speciem liquidò demonstrant. Hinc enim quid nos deceat, quorum officium vitaeque institutum est ut quae ad veram religionem spectent doceamus, facile erit perspicere.

PRIMÒ mihi propositum est, nonnullos sacri codicis locos proferre, in quibus divinum illud numen, cuius omnia sunt plena,
coelum

coelum habitare dicitur ; idque modo tam singulari, ut nulli loco terrestri, quantumvis solenniter ad numinis cultum dicato, aut praesentiâ illius decorato, convenire possit.

ATQUE hic, ut illa taceam, in quibus
 Gen. xi. 5, 7. Jehova dicitur *descendisse*, ut urbem illam
 insanâsque turrium substructiones aspiceret, quae Babelis nomen a sequenti confusione obtinebant ; quam tamen descensionem de coelo tanquam de habitationis loco constat fuisse factam : ut illa taceam, quae angelum Jehovae de coelo Hâgarem et postea Abrahamum interpellantem memorant : ut ea quoque praeteream, quae passim in sacro codice de igne ad consumenda sacrificia β coelitus delapso narrantur : illud nequaquam praetereundum est ; quod Solomon, quum templum magnificis illis et rege dignis impensis aedificasset, illudque numini consecraturus γ *domum Dei* vocasset, et stationem, in qua ille semper habitaret ; continuò tamen manus suas versus coelum, tanquam numinis domum indubitata sui què dignissimam expandit, eoque modo preces ad Deum fudit, iteratissimeque verbis saepius petiit, uti vellet Jehova *de. δ coelis deque suae sedis loco exaudire*, atque populo Israelitico propitium se monstrare, quum in illa aede aut versus illam aedem

β 1 Paral. xxi. 26. 2 Par. vii. 1. γ 1 Reg. viii. 20. 2 Paral. vi. 2. δ 1 Reg. viii. 30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49. 2 Par. vi. 21, 30, 33.

aedem ipsum essent veneraturi. Eiusdem generis est, quòd rex idem Solomon, quum concionatoris personam fuscipiens docere velit quonam modo mortales deceat *in aede Jehovae* sese gerere, illud moneat; ne sint Eccl. v. 2, 3. proni ad loquendum, neve multa ibi verba fundant, *propterea quòd Deus sit in coelis, ipsi autem in terra.* Neque verò praeterendum est, quòd David, regis Solomonis pater, rex item atque vates insignis, qui pio animi proposito tam magnifica de *atriis Jehovae* deque *aede terrestri* sexcenties in suis psalmis praedicat, passim tamen in iisdem psalmis coelum *numinis* *domum*, *excelsum locum divinae* *sanctitatis*, et nominatim *templum* appellet; Deumque interpellans dicat, *Ad te levavi oculos meos*, o Psal. cxxiii. 1. *qui sedes in coelis*; quodque alibi affirmet, *Jehovam suum solium in coelo stabilivisse*, ciii. 19. *cujus regnum omnibus praesideat.* Eòdem recidit, quòd Esaïas propheta, Deum de misericordia orans, dicat: *Aspice de coelis*, Esa. lxiii. 15. *et vide ex sede tuae sanctitatis atque gloriae.* Neque de alio usquam loco intelligenda sunt quae Deus ipse per eundem vatem profatus est, quum diceret, *se, qui supra omnes sanctus esset pariter atque excelsus, in sancto et sublimi loco habitare.* Ivii. 15. Clariùs adhuc loquitur Stephanus protomartyr; coelumque solum Deo esse habitandi locum, aedes autem terrestres ipsi nonnisi ad com-
morationem

Actor. vii. 46
---49.

Mat. vi. 9.

Mat. xxiii. 21.

morationem quandam esse aptas, significat. Quod enim *templum* Davidi erat in animo ut Deo Jacobi extrueret, *tabernaculum* vocat. Et quum dixisset, *Solomonem Deo domum condidisse*, statim se ita corripit: *veruntamen celsissimus ille in templis manufactis non habitat, ut ait propheta: coelum mihi solium est, terra autem pedum scabellum: quamnam mihi domum construitis, dicit Jehovah, aut quisnam meae requietis est locus?* At vero supra omnia observandum est nobis quid hac in re tradiderit dominus noster Jesus Christus. Is, quum discipulorum animos ad pietatem vellet formare, ipsos edocuit, ut Deum tanquam *patrem coelestem*, (τὸν ἐν τοῖς ἑρᾶνοις) indies interpellarent; ζ multisque in locis rerum conditorem eodem nomine insignivit. Et, quod hoc in loco majus est, is, etsi *Deum in templo habitare* agnosceret, eamque ob causam discipulis suis non permetteret ut per *templum* jurarent, eodem quasi spiritu prohibuit etiam ne per *coelum* jurarent, utique quòd sit *Dei solium, cui ipse insideat*.

Non opus est ut ulteriùs hac in re pergamus; quum per omnes fere temporum periodos, quoad ejus rei ulla supersint in sacro codice vestigia, jam vidimus, coelum quasi *aedem Dei*, locumque habitationis pri-

ζ Mat. vi. 1. vii. 11, 21. xii. 50. xviii. 14, 19.
Mar. xi. 25, 26.

primarium fuisse existimatum. Id tamen praeterire nequeo : in illo librorum antiquissimo, qui Jobi historiam continet, atque in verbis Danielis prophetae, *coelorum* nomine ipsum Deum intelligi, propterea quòd Dei numen ibi habitet ; nec non eandem locutionis formulam ipsi Christo fuisse usitatam. Interea, etsi propter numinis in coelo habitationem pii homines ad coelum conversi Deum adoraverint ; coelum tamen ipsum propterea esse adorandum nusquam significatur. Imo contra ; qui coelum, aut quicquid in eo sit, solem, lunam, astra coluerint, ut qui divinam majestatem minuissent, sacra pagina semper damnavit.

Job xxxv. 5.
Dan. iv. 26.

Mat. xxi. 25.
Luc. xv. 18,
21.

Si testimoniis allatis vim aliquam conferre possent quae a gentilibus sunt tradita ; facile esset de poetis deque aliis scriptoribus multa in eundem sensum adducere. At ne longus sim, ex omnibus unum citabo Homerum : qui cùm caeteros deos, ut est theologia gentilis, " ἑρπύκωνας et * ἑπὶ ἑρπύκωνας appellat, sedemque immortalium ait esse ζ coelum stelliferum ; tum vero praecipuè de Jove deorum supremo loquitur quasi de θ coelo descendente, ut in aliquem locum terrestrem se recipiat : qui

11 Il. α. 570. * 129. ζ ibid. 108.

θ ——— πάλιν ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε
Ἰδὼς ἐν κυρυφῇσι καθέζετο πιδνέσσας,
ἑρπύκωνας καταβὰς.

Il. λ. 183, 184.

E c

homines

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homines Jovem precantes ¹ manum versus coelum porrigere, aut saltem in coelum ² suspicere indicat : quique Mercurium ³ nuncium ab Jove de coelo missum saepe introducit : ut illud taceam, quòd ⁴ fulminatoris sive tonantis nomine sexcenties Jovem insigniat.

SED de re adeo clara et manifesta satis, opinor, vel nimium forsan, dixisse videar. Ad alterum igitur caput accedam : quo scilicet ostendere proposui, terrestres quosdam locos antiquis temporibus gloriosâ numinis praesentiâ fuisse honoratos ; piosque homines, Deo ipso annuente, illis locis propterea reverentiam adhibuisse ; eorum autem locorum nonnullos Deum sibi habitandi aut saltem commorandi causa sumpsisse, ideoque jussisse ut multo in honore haberentur.

ATQUE hic a Mosis temporibus rectè ordiremur. Quae enim ante illa tempora narrantur, non tam habitationis aut etiam commorationis divinae sunt exempla, quam occasionum quarundam, quas Deus, aut sui colendi, aut consilia sua jussaque audiendi, praebere voluit. Diu quidem antea certum est Jehovam ad planiciem Morae,

¹ Νέστωρ αὐτὲ μάλιστα Γερήνιος, ἕρως Ἀχαιῶν,

² Εὐχέλο, χεῖρ ὀρέσαν εἰς ὤραν ἀσεπένητα.

Ζεὺ πάτερ.

Il. o. 370, 371.

³ ἰδὼν εἰς ἔραν ἐνέον.

Il. φ. 272. τ. 257.

⁴ Il. ω. 331—336.

⁵ Il. η. 411. Il. ο. 293. Odyss. θ. 465. ο. 180.

Morae, quo in loco Sichema postea est Gen. xii. 6, 7.
condita, Abramo apparuisse, totamque ter-
ram Chananaeam ejus femini se daturum
promisisse. Constat etiam Abramum aram
ibidem Jehovae construxisse, *quòd sibi il-
lic apparuisset.* Pari ratione Isaacus, quum
illi Jehova ad Bersabam appareret, foedus-
que quod cum patre pepigerat renovaret,
altare ibi extruxit, nomenque Jehovae illic
invocavit; quippe qui eo in loco speciali
quodam modo *praesentem* se demonstra-
set. Atque, ut multa alia praeteream;
ipsum Bethelis nomen, manifestum est isti
loco propterea fuisse datum, quòd Jacobo
illic per quietem Jehova sese exhibens pro-
missionem antea Abrahamo et Isaaco fac-
tam ei confirmasset. Hoc solum in causa
fuit, cur is reverentiâ ductus non modò
Jehovam illo esse in loco affirmaverit, illum-
que locum *Dei domum* vocaverit; sed et
lapides quos pro cervicali sibi disposuerat in
statuam erigens, oleum in eam effuderit,
seque Jehovae, quem sibi propitium fore
sperabat, decimas omnium daturum vove-
rit. Ad cujus voti solutionem Deus ipse
postea Jacobo jussit, ut Bethalem se con-
ferret, ibique aram sibi faceret, qui ei Esaum xxxv. 1, 3, 6;
fratrem fugienti *apparuisset.* 7.

xxvi. 25.

xxviii.

CONSTAT igitur, ante Molis tempora,
Deo ipso volente, nonnullos locos terrestres
multo in honore fuisse habitos: ejusque
rei causam fuisse, quòd Deus ipse se iis in

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locis singulari quodam modo *praesentem* demonstraverat. At quum propius abesset illud tempus, quo vellet Jehova populum sibi ab nationibus idololatræ segregare, cui ipse, qui totius universi rex esset, peculiari quadam ratione imperaret; quumque ei populo certissimam vellet unius veri Dei ejusque consiliorum notitiam, quæ omnibus postea nationibus usui esset, impertire; videmus ipsum insigniorem adhuc sui copiam fecisse, majoremque iis locis reverentiam, in quibus ea copia daretur, conciliare voluisse. Id satis erat manifestum, quum Mosi, quem ejus populi gubernatorem constituere volebat, ad Horebum montem degenti, de rubo ardente Jehova appareret, calceosque propterea eum exuere juberet, *quòd locus in quo staret, sacer esset*: erat autem ideo sacer, quòd ibi Deus adefset. Idem liquidò patebat, quum de monte Sina, non sine magno terroris apparatu, in lege tradenda, numinis sui praesentiam testaretur. *Mons enim fumabat totus, suumque fumum instar calcariae emittebat, propterea quòd eo Jehova in igne descenderat: totus etiam magnopere contremiscebatur*: edebantur praeterea fragores terribiles atque fulgura, cum vehementissimo tubae sonitu. Terminus interea populo circumscriptus est, nequis ex eis in montem ascenderet; edicta mortis poenâ, siquis eum vel manu attigisset.

Exod. iii.

xix. 18.

ver. 16.

ATTAMEN

ATTAMEN neque de monte Horebo, neque de Sina, neque de ullo alio loco terrestri, tam magnifica in sacris literis traduntur, quam de templo diu postea extructo, aut etiam de tabernaculo a Mose condito. Cujus rei facile videre est eam fuisse causam: quòd cum aliis in locis tantum per occasiones quasdam praesentem se Jehova exhiberet, in hisce *habitare* se velle demonstraret. Disertis enim verbis edixit, ut Israelitae sanctuarium sibi facerent, *quòd ipse inter eos habitaret*: quumque Mosi in mandatis dedisset, ut scriptum suum oraculum in arca reponeret, quae ver. 21. Exod. xxv. 8. arca in intimis tabernaculi posteaque templi penetralibus esset collocanda; quumque insuper jussisset, ut operculum aureum arcae imponeret, duobus cherubis aureis ornatum, et propitiatorii nomine insignitum; fidem dedit, velle se *de illo propitiatorio deque medio cheruborum Mosén convenire*, atque illa omnia quae populo Israelitico essent observanda *profari*. Hinc est, quòd postquam in extructo tabernaculo divina numinis gloria destinatum sibi locum capeffivisset, adeo saepe de *Jehova inter cherubos* *habitante* audiamus. Haec etiam causa fuit, quare cum pontifex maximus, cui soli id permittebatur, adyta sanctuarii intraret, *coram & facie Jehovae se sistere*, omniaque illa

E e 3

v Esa. xxxvii. 16. 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 1 Reg. xix. 15. 1 Par. xiii. 6. & Exod. xxviii. 29, 30.

illa quae in sanctuarii penetralibus praeter ipsam arcam reponi solebant, ° *coram Jehovahae facie reponi*, dicerentur. Et quoniam vel ipsum tabernaculum, propter Dei commemorationem, pro *ipsius* π *domo* est habitum; quicumque illud tabernaculum accederet, ρ *coram Jehovah venire*, quodcumque eò adferretur, σ *coram ipso adferri*, dicebatur. Jehovaham autem non pontifici tantum et sacerdotibus in tabernaculo sui copiam fecisse, sed et universo populo suam in illo loco praesentiam demonstrasse, testis erat Exod. xl. 34. *splendor* ille divinus, qui tabernaculum implevit, ac *nubes* quae ipsum operuit, quo ---38.
ver. 1, 2. tempore ex Jehovahae mandato tabernaculum erigeretur. Cujus splendoris tanta vis erat, ut donec sustolleretur nubes, ipse Moses in tabernaculum ingredi non posset. Ejusdem generis et illud erat; quòd ante quàm tabernaculum omnibus modis esset absolutum, quum Moses Jehovaham interpellatus illud intraret, descendens columna nubis ad ostium confisteret, *omnisque populus reverentiâ ductus assurgeret, seque coram Deo incurvaret.* Ex. xxxiii. 9, 10.

ATQUE haec quidem de tabernaculo narrantur: de templo adhuc majora. Ipsum tabernaculum, propterea quòd Deus ibi habitaret, *Dei domus* vocabatur: At sensu

° Ex. xvi. 34.
² Sam. xii. 20.
σ Lev. v. 6, 7.

π Ex. xxiii. 19. 1 Sam. iii. 15.
ρ Lev. iv. 6, 7. Num. viii. 10, 11.

sensu minùs proprio. Partim enim propter
 profectiones in deserto, partim propter bella
 a Saule et Davide gesta, non arca modo,
 sed et quod eam continebat, tabernaculum
 totum, de loco in locum frequentissimè
 movebatur. Quum igitur Davidi in animo
 esset ut *requietis aedem arcae foederis Je-* ^{1 Par. xxviii.}
hovae construeret; Deus ipse, quantum in- ^{2.}
 teresset *aedem* inter atque *tabernaculum*,
 Davidem alloquendo demonstravit. Tùne, ^{2 Sam. vii. 5,}
 inquit, *mibi domum ad habitandum con-* ^{6.}
strues: qui ex quo Israelitas ex Aegypto e-
duxi, ad hunc diem, domum non habitavi, sed
in tentorio atque tabernaculo versatus sum?
 Eodemque, in templo consecrando, re-
 spiciens Solomon, *domum se Jehovae ad* ^{1 Reg. viii. 13.}
habitandum aedificasse dixit, mansionis locum
in quo semper resideret. Notandum autem
 hic est; quòd cum templum esset omnibus
 numeris perfectum, eoque deductum omne
 sacrum tabernaculi instrumentum, quum-
 que arca foederis in suum locum, in ady- ^{ver. 4--11.}
 tum domùs, quod est sanctum sanctorum,
 a sacerdotibus esset illata; *tanta nubes*, ut
 antea tabernaculum, *domum Jehovae occu-*
pavit, ut non possent sacerdotes ad ministran-
dum consistere; splendor divinus, qui ex He-
 braeorum consuetudine *gloria Jehovae* vo-
 catur, *aedem implevit*, atque universo populo
 signum fuit ipsius Jehovae habitantis. Idem
 factum est post preces Solomonis in tem- ^{2 Par. vii. 1,}
 plo consecrando effusas. Quas preces ipse ^{2, 3.}

² Par. vii. 12. Jehova se exaudisse, eumque locum sibi pro sacrificiorum domo elegisse, brevi postea Solomoni declaravit.

SED hisce relictis, ad ea nos convertamus, ex quibus apparebit quantam reverentiam ipse Deus, tum templo, tum etiam propter eandem rationem tabernaculo, adhiberi voluerit. Atque hic onerosum esset quae adduci possent, recitare: pauca sufficient. Ex duodecim tribubus uni tantum τ permissum fuit ut in rebus sacris ministraret; clade caeteris denunciata, si ad sanctuarium accederent. Levitis necessum erat, ut vestes prius ν lavarent, utque a pontifice expiarentur, quàm fas esset tentorium conventus ad aliquod ministerium exercendum intrare. † Uni tantum familiae sacerdotium permissum: qui ex alia familia aut sacra facere aut res sacras attingere auderet, morte puniendus. Porro, ex ipsa

omnia,

Lev. xxi. 17 ^{23.} Aharonis familia, sicui aliquod esset corporis vitium, non permissum fuit ut ad velum, aut etiam altare, ad dapem Deo libandam accederet, ne loca Dei sacra profanaret. Quae autem necessaria erant ad sacerdotes ipsumque praecipuè pontificem consecrandum, ut suis quisque ex lege possit fungi muneribus, longum esset persequi: quae igitur omnia prorsus filebo. De ipsis muneribus haec tantum notabo: ipsum sanctu-

τ Num. iii. 6, 7, 8. viii. 19. xviii. 21, 22.
 ν viii. 21, 22. † iii. 10. iv. 15, 18, 19, 20.

sanctuarium solenniter fuisse expiandum : Lev. xvi. 16.
 sanctum sanctorum soli pontifici adeun-
 dum : nulli alii permissum, ut propitiato-
 rium accederet ; eique, praeterquam semel
 in anno, qui magnus erat expiationis dies,
 aditus prohibitus. Quanta autem in vene-
 ratione numinis praesentia haberetur, in-
 dicio est ; quòd pontifici cum intra velum
 intrasset, sub mortis poena praescriptum
 fuerit, ut suffimentum coram Jehova in
 ignem ingereret, quòd nubes propitiatorium
 operiret, splendorisque divini conspectum
 ab ipso pontifice intercluderet. Accedit,
 quòd circa illum locum in quo divina nu-
 minis gloria resideret, terminus, etiam in-
 ter proficiscendum in deserto, circumscribe-
 retur : quòd in ipsis castris accuratissima
 mundities, sordibus in terram defossis, ser-
 varetur, *propterea quòd Jehova in Israelita-*
rum castris versaretur : quòdque leprosi
 omnes et cadavere aut alio quovis modo
 polluti ejicerentur : hac ratione ab ipso Je-
 hova assignatâ ; *ut ne castra polluant, quo-*
rum in medio ego habito.

ver. 12, 13.

Josh. iii. 4.

Deut. xxiii. 10

---14.

Num. v. 2, 3.

REBUS ita constitutis, etiam stante ad-
 huc tabernaculo edictum est ; *ut quicum-*
que de Israelis familia victimam in castris
extrâve castra immolasset, neque ad oracu-
laris tabernaculi introitum coram Jehova
stitisset ; is perinde ac si caedem fecisset ha-
beretur, deque medio sui populi exscindere-
tur. Quod praeceptum ea de causa tra-
 ditum

Lev. xvii. 3,

4, 5, 8, 9.

ver. 7.

Lev. xvii. 7.

Deut. xii. 1---
14.

traditum esse videtur, cujus in ipso tradendo mentio facta est; *ut ne deinceps sua sacrificia daemonibus sacrificarent, cumque eis scortarentur*: constat enim maximum fuisse idolatriae periculum, si quovis in loco sacrificandi Israelitis facultas fuisset data. *Perpetuum hoc institutum dicitur, per omnes Israelitarum generationes servandum.* Ideoque haud mirum est, illud a Mose fuisse repetitum, quum prope in conspectum terrae promissae adductos, quemadmodum ex eo tempore, praesertim vero post templum conditum, se gerere deberent, ipsos docere vellet. Atque tanti in hac materia momenti est hoc praeceptum; ut non pigeat in Mosis ipsius verbis, etsi longioribus, hic describere. *Haec, inquit, sunt decreta et judicia, quae ut exequamini vobis curandum est, in terra quam Jehova Deus vester patrius dat vobis possidendam; et exequamini quamdiu in terris vivetis. Omnino omnia loca deletote, in quibus gentes quas vos expulsi estis suos deos coluerunt, sive in editis montibus, sive in collibus, sive sub quacumque arbore opaca. Eorum aras eruitote; statuas perfringitote; lucos igni crematote; simulacra deorum exscinditote; denique illorum nomen de loco illo tollitote. Adversus Jehovam Deum vestrum ne ita feceritis. Sed locum, quem ipse ex omnibus vestris tribubus elegerit, ut in eo nomen suum statuatur et ipse habitet, petitote: eò profecti, vestra holocausta, sacrificia,*

crificia, decimasque, et oblationem manûs vestrae, item votiva, voluntaria munera, et bovis pecorisque vestri primogenita affertote; ibique coram Jehova Deo vestro epulamini, laeti omnibus vestris operibus, unâ cum familiis, quod vos Jehova Deus vester felicitaverit. Ne facitote quemadmodum nos hic hodie facimus, quod cuique libet: etenim nondum pervenistis in quietem atque haereditatem quam vobis Deus vester Jehova daturus est. Cum autem trajecto Jordane sederitis in terra, cujus in haereditatem Jehova Deus vester vos immittet, ejusque beneficio ab omnibus vestris finitimis hostibus quieti in tuto agetis: quem locum Jehova Deus vester elegerit ut ibi suum nomen constituat, edfertote omnia quae ego vobis praecipio; videlicet vestra holocausta, decumas, quae donaria secreveritis, et votorum vestrorum lecta omnia, quae Jehovae voveritis: et gaudetote coram Jehova Deo vestro, unâ cum vestris filiis, filiabus, servis, ancillis, et Levitis vestratibus, utpote qui vobiscum partem aut haereditatem non habeant. Cavetote ne holocausta vestra ubivis immoletis. Sed in eoduntaxat loco, quem Jehova in aliqua vestrarum tribuum elegerit, ibi holocausta vestra immolatote, ibique omnia quae ego vobis praecipio facitote.

VIDETUR ergo Deus, quum populum sibi a gentibus idololatriis segregaret, claram

De locorum sanctitate.

ram voluisse sui copiam illi propterea facere, certosque aliquos locos praesentiâ suâ sacros constituere, quò ab gentium idololatria purum, et in sui veneratione constantem, asservaret. Id saltem partim in causâ fuisse dicatur. Finem quidem multo nobiliorem, utpote qui ad omnium ubivis gentium beneficium pertineret, Deum sibi proposuisse apparet, quum sacrificia solummodo in tabernaculo aut templo offerri juberet; nempe ut grandi illi sacrificio, quod in templo manibus non factò, scilicet coelesti, a pontifice sanctissimo esset offerendum, viam pararet. Attamen ad alteram eam causam Deum quoque attendisse, indicio esse possunt, praeter ea quae de sacris literis jam deprompta sunt, cùm Israelitarum ad idola colenda propensio, tum finitimarum nationum, atque adeo patrum suorum usus, Abrahami demum tempore remotus.

Quod ad finitimas gentes attinet, Aegyptios praesertim, Syros, Assyrios, Chaldaeosque, a quibus ipse Abrahamus ortum duxerat; ut nihil dicam de Chananaeis, quorum terram, deletis aut saltem expulsis fere prioribus incolis, Israelitae possidebant; manifestò liquet, tam ex sacra pagina, quàm ex aliis etiam scriptis, eos, etsi diverso more, idolis tamen colendis fuisse prorsus deditos. Ipsi etiam Persae, uti
post

‘ post φ Herodotum refert χ Strabo, etsi ne-
 ‘ que statuas neque aras erigerent, in ex-
 ‘ celsis tamen locis sacrificabant, coelum
 ‘ Jovem esse existimantes: solem praete-
 ‘ rea, atque lunam, Venerem, ignem, tel-
 ‘ lurem, ventosque, et aquam colebant.’

Quid igitur mirum, si Israelitae, exem-
 plo ducti tot aliarum gentium, suos sibi
 deastros, saltem in lucis inque locis ex-
 celsis colendos, si non et in ipsis aedibus
 penates, habere vellent? Immo, nisi ad
 ipsos ab idololatria servandos omnia sacri-
 ficia illo solummodo in loco essent offe-
 rendae, in quo Deus singularem sui copiam
 facere voluit; unde est quod tam saepe in
 sacro codice de *lucis*, de *quercetis*, deque
locis excelsis, idque maximè post tem-
 plum conditum, Deus ipse conqueratur;
 quodque eis exprobet, *se in montium*
verticibus sacrificare, et in collibus suffire,
sub quercu, populoque et terebintho, propterea
quod earum arborum umbra sit bona? Unde
 etiam,

Hof. iv. 13.

φ Πέρσαι δὲ διδά νόμοις τοῖσι χρεωμένους· ἀγάλμα-
 τα μὲν καὶ νηὲς καὶ βαμῆς ἐκ ἐν νόμῳ ποιευμένους ἰδρύ-
 εσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖσι ποιέουσι μαρίην ἐπιφερεσι· ὡς μὲν
 ἡμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι ἐκ ἀνθρωπογενείας ἐνόμισαν τὰς θεάς,
 καλῶτερ οἱ Ἕλληνες, εἶναι· οἱ δὲ νομίζουσι Διὶ μὲν, ἐπὶ
 τὰ ὑψηλότατα τῶν ἑρέων ἀναβαίνοντες, θυσίας ἔρδειν,
 τὸν κύκλον πάντα τῷ ἑρανῷ Δία καλέοντες· θύουσι δὲ ἡλίῳ,
 καὶ σελήνῃ, καὶ γῇ, καὶ πυρὶ, καὶ ὕδασι, καὶ ἀνέμοισι.
 Herodot. Clio. pag. 55. edit. Gronov. 1715.

χ Πέρσαι τῶν αὐτῶν ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ βαμῆς ἐχ
 ἰδρύονται· θύουσι δὲ ἐν ὑψηλῷ τόπῳ, τὸν ἑρανὸν ἡσέμενα
 Δία· τιμῶσι δὲ καὶ ἡλίῳ, ὃν καλοῦσι Μίθραν· καὶ σε-
 λήνῃ, καὶ Ἀφροδίτῃ, καὶ πῦρ, καὶ γῇ, καὶ ἀνέμοις,
 καὶ ὕδασι. Strab. lib. kv. pag. 732. edit. Casaub. Pa-
 ris, 1620.

etiam, quòd in sacra historia reges aliter
 pientissimi in reprehensionem incurrant,
quòd loca excelsa non sustulerint? Quum-
 que ex auctore jam laudato certum sit,
 ‘ ab antiquis poetis † *omnia templa lucos fu-*
 ‘ *isse appellata,*’ cujus ea videtur fuisse cau-
 sa, quòd arboribus fere circumdarentur;
 quàm illud accuratè convenit iis quae jam
 dicta sunt; quàmque sapienter constitutum
 fuit, ut ex quo tempore Israelitae sub pe-
 culiari quodam Jehovahae imperio poneban-
 tur, *iis nefas esset ullarum arborum lucum*
propter ipsius aram conferere; quum tamen
 Abrahamus, qui ante ea tempora vixit, non
 impune modo, sed et Deo annuente, *nemus*
in Bersaba plantaverit, ibique Jehovahae nomen
invocaverit?

Deut. xvi. 21.

Gen. xxi. 33.

DEUM in quovis loco comprecari, eique
 de beneficiis acceptis grates agere, neque
 Israelitis neque ulli cuiquam genti unquam
 est vetitum. Quàm igitur planum est,
 sacrificiorum oblationem ei soli loco, in
 quo Jehova manifesta huic populo dederat
 praesentiae suae documenta, fuisse propterea
 restrictam, ne si aliis in locis sacrificarent,
 ad idola se reciperent? quàm sapienter
 provisum fuit, ut ad eum solum locum
 sacrificia deducerentur? quàmque propriè
 is locus *domus Jehovahae* vocabatur, quem
 sibi pro habitatione tam claris indiciis ipse
 pub-

† ‘Οι δὲ ποιηταὶ κοσμεῖσιν, ὅλην καλεῖσθαι τὰ ἱερά
 πάντα, καὶ ἢ ψαλά. Strab. lib. ix. pag. 412.

publicè designaverat? Demus ergo, deorum gentilium templa ^o *aedes istorum deorum* fuisse vocatas: demus, de *Dagonis*, *Baalis*, *Astarothae*, *Nisrochi*, aliorumque deorum aedibus, ex consuetudine communi sumptam in ipso sacro codice mentionem fieri: demus etiam, ab aliis auctoribus de Jovis, Junonis, Veneris, aliorumque deorum ac dearum aedibus commemorari: quàm parum tamen vel nihil potius sit rationis cur loci isti hoc nomine insignirentur facilè apparet; quum dii illi deaeque nullo documento possent probare, aut se iis in locis commorari, aut etiam in ipsa rerum natura existere; nisi illud demum argumenti loco sit, quòd qui fictitios deos caecutientibus animis colerent, ipsorum simulachra illic adservarent.

AT QUI his, ni fallor, satis demonstravimus, Jehovah, Deum illum verum atque unicum, nonnullos locos terrestres speciali suâ praesentiâ olim fuisse dignatum, eaque ratione tum se existere probavisse, tum etiam divinae suae voluntatis clara indicia dedisse: cumque unam gentem ex aliis omnibus ad sua audienda consilia segregasset, ei jussisse ne sacrificia ullo alio in loco offerrent, nisi quem ipse pro *sua domo* sibi elegisse monstraret, quemque ideo multo in honore haberi vellet.

SEQUITUR, ut quid de reverentia locis debita

^o 1 Sam. v. 2, 5. 1 Par. x. 10. 2 Reg. x. 26, 27. xi. 18. 1 Sam. xxxi. 9, 10. Esa. xxxvii. 38. Dan. i. 2.

debita libri novi instrumenti doceant inquiramus ; quidque in causa fuerit, cur hac in re tantum differant quae post Christum natum, ab iis quae ante ipsius adventum, a Deo sint hominibus tradita.

2 Par. vii. 12.
Lev. xvii.
Deut. xii.

Ex iis quae superiori capite dicta sunt vidimus, templum Hierosolymitanum, in quo tanquam in palatio regio Jehova habitabat, sacrificiorum praecipue causam fuisse extructum : vidimus etiam, ea quae de templo deque sacrificiis ibi offerendis a Deo mandata sunt, Israelitarum fuisse propria ; cui genti ipse peculiari quodam modo praefidebat. Porro ex historia notum est, post instauratum quod a Chaldaeis dirutum fuerat templum, Samaritanos in monte Gerizimo alterum extruxisse, Hierosolymitanae aedis aemulum ; multasque inde ortas esse Judaeos inter et Samaritanos contentiones. Maximi igitur momenti est quod Dominus noster Jesus Christus mulieri Samaritidi, prope ipsum montem Gerizimum degenti respondit, quum illa ipsum prophetam esse suspicans diceret, suos majores in illo monte Deum coluisse, Judaeos autem affirmare Hierosolymis esse locum in quo sit colendus. *Dicit ei Jesus : Mulier, crede mihi, adventat hora, cum nec in hoc monte nec Hierosolymis patrem coletis. Vos quid colatis nescitis : nos quid colamus novimus ; quippe quia salus a Judaeis est. Sed adventat hora, et nunc est,*

Joh. iv. 20--
24.

est, cum veri cultores patrem in spiritu ac veritate colent : etenim Pater a talibus se coli postulat. Spiritus est Deus : et qui eum colunt, in spiritu et veritate debent colere.

QUANTUM haec ab iis differunt, quae superiori capite memoravimus ! Ut enim de monte Gerizimo nihil dicam ; quem locum singulari Jehovahae praesentiâ non liquet unquam fuisse decoratum, quoque in loco Samaritani sua sponte, non Dei monitu, templum extruxerant, ibique nunc Deum verum, nunc idola colere consueverant : de ipsis Hierosolymis indicat religionis nostrae auctor, omnem sanctitatem brevi esse tollendam. Fuerat quidem tempus, quum templum Hierosolymis Jehovahae jussu exstructum, ipse pro sua domo in qua habitaret elegit ; eamque ob causam omnia sacrificia ipsi offerenda eum solum in locum deduci voluit : cujus partim praesentiâ, partim auctoritate, sine dubio pro sancto haberi debuit, donec ipse aliter constituisset. Illud brevi tunc faciendum Christus hisce verbis indicat : nec tamen ullam aliam, five aedem, five urbem, in Hierosolymorum locum, sanctitatis causâ, substituit. Imo contra, omnem illam sanctitatem penitus esse tollendam significare videtur, nec in ullo deinceps loco terrestri mansuram. Quem enim cultum in templo adhiberi solitum erat, in aliud genus mutandum esse significat, qui neque Hierosolymis, neque

F f

ullo

ullo alio loco contineretur. Victimarum oblatio *carnem*, ut apostoli verbo utar, nimis redolebat, quàm quae Dei optimi maximi cultoribus semper conveniret. Fuerat quidem illa quondam necessaria, uti ex jam dictis vidimus: atque sapientissimè effectum est, ut quae leges de victimis apud Judaeos offerendis latae erant, ita essent comparatae, ut ad omnium gentium beneficium aliquando pertinerent. At vero declarat Christus, Deo, qui ipse fit Spiritus, cultum spirituales maximè esse gratum: quem et in carnalis locum ita substitueret, ut nullo terrestri ambitu coaceretur. Haec illa *veritas* est, quae in se nihil habeat umbratile: hic cultus, cuius usu *Deum* ipsum per suum Spiritum *in ipsis cultoribus habitare*, multa novi instrumenti testimonia declarant, eosque propterea *Dei templum* esse affirmant.

ITA S. Paulus priore ad Corinthios epistola: *An nescitis, inquit, vos Dei esse templum, Deique Spiritum in vobis habitare? Si quis Dei templum corrumpit, corrumpet hunc Deus: templum enim Dei sanctum est; qui estis vos.* Idem ad Ephesios scribens, cum dixisset, utrosque tum Judaeos tum gentes aditum habere per unum Spiritum ad Patrem; haec infert. *Ergo non jam peregrini estis et inquilini, sed sanctorum cives Deique domestici, super fundamentum apostolorum atque prophetarum extructi, anguli capite ipso Jesu*

1 Cor. iii. 16,
17.

Eph. ii. 18--
22.

Iesu Christo : in quo totum aedificium congruenter coagmentatum crescit in sanctum templum in Domino : in quo et vos unà aedificamini, ut sitis Dei domicilium per Spiritum. Eodem redeunt quae ad Christianos dispersos S. Petrus etiam de Christo anguli capite in hunc modum scribit. Ad quem 1 Pet. ii. 4-7. *accedentes, qui est lapis vivus, ab hominibus quidem improbatus, apud Deum vero lectus et eximius, ipsi quoque ut vivi lapides aedificamini, domus spiritualis, sacerdotium sanctum, ad offerendum spirituales hostias, Deo per Iesum Christum acceptas. Peroportuna sunt ad propositum nostrum haec apostoli verba : in quibus, loquendi formulâ variatâ, Christianos non modò domum appellat, in qua Deo sacrificia offerantur, sed etiam sacerdotes : at vero, tum domum, tum ipsas hostias in ea oblatas, spirituales esse dicit ; qua ratione templo illi manibus factò, victimisque in eo immolatis, manifestissimè opponuntur.*

QUAM haec accuratè congruunt cum iis novi instrumenti dictis, ubi de *Assiduo laudationis sacrificio, Deo per Christum libando,* Heb. xiii. 15. *boc est, de fructu labiorum, ejus nomen celebrantium ; ut etiam de beneficentia ac liberalitate, quasi de sacrificiis Deo gratissimis, fit sermo ? At haec omnia neque templum aliquod manibus factum, neque altare, neque sacerdotes qui victimas pro aliis offerant, omnino requirunt : ideoque in*

novo instrumento christianis hominibus
 haec usui esse nusquam affirmatur : nihil
 quicquam de *altari*, nisi per figuram ;
 nulla *viſtina*, nullus *sacerdos*, praeter Je-
 Heb. ix. 26, ſum Chriſtum, qui *ſeipſum ſemel obtulit* ;
 28. nullum *templi ſacrarium*, praeter *coeleſte*
 ver. 11, 12. illud, in quod per ſuum ſanguinem *Jeſus*
aeternam redemptionem adeptus ſemel eſt in-
greſſus, illic memoratur : quae autem *ſa-*
cificia a christianis offeruntur hominibus,
laudationis et beneficentiae, uti jam vidi-
 mus, dicuntur ; qua quidem ratione ex
 iis nemo eſt quem non pro *sacerdote* Deus
 agnoſcat.

Iis quae jam adduximus et alia adjici
 poſſent ex novo instrumento deſumpta tes-
 timonia, quae *Dei domum* ex christianis ho-
 minibus conſtare ſignificent : nulla autem,
 quae aedificium aliquod cultui chriſtiano
 deſtinatum eo nomine inſigniant. Nec
 omnino mirandum eſt, Chriſtum ejuſque
 apoſtolos non adeo magnifica de locis ubi
 Deus jam ſit colendus, deque honore il-
 lis locis adhibendo dixiſſe, quàm de tem-
 plo antiquitus ſunt dicta. Quem enim
 cultum publicum Chriſtus ex Patris mente
 ei adhibendum eſſe ſignificavit, non ad
 templi, ſed ad ſynagogae conſtitutionem
 conſtat fuiſſe accommodatum ; quae ne-
 que quicquam habebat cum offerendis vic-
 timis commune, neque ſingulari aliquo lo-
 co

co cohibebatur, neque loci sanctitatem, uti templum, sibi vindicabat.

NEQUE vero per ipsam evangelii constitutionem fieri potuit, quin sub ea cessaret illa loci sanctitas quae templo fuisset conciliata. Illud enim Dei colendi genus quod per sacrificia gerebatur, necesse est ut cessaret, quum ea omnis πολιτεία, cujus pars magna erat sacerdotium Aharonicum, etiam cessaverit; quumque Jesus, unicus ille constitutionis evangelicae sacerdos, rem omnem nostram coram Deo, non in templo manibus facto, sed in coelo transegerit; cujus coelestis templi terrenum illud non nisi umbra fuerat. *Unicā ille oblatione* Heb. x. 14. *eos qui sanctificantur in perpetuum consecravit.* Non igitur opus est, imo neque locus, ulli inter homines sacerdoti, qui pro nobis sacrificia offerat; aut templo terreno, in quo offerantur. Divinus ille pontifex coram Deo pro nobis semper compareret, in illa scilicet gloriosa Dei praesentia, in lumine illo mortalibus inaccessso, cujus etiam ipsa tabernaculi templique Shekina non nisi levem tenuemque habuit imaginem, terrestri ejus domicilio congruentem.

Hujus generis sunt quae ex novi instrumenti scriptis, praecipue autem accuratissimā illā ad Hebraeos epistolā docemur: *habere nos scilicet pontificem, domui Dei,* (hoc est, ecclesiae) *praefectum; unicū illum pontificem, qui quoniam in sem-* Heb. x. 21. *piternum* vii. 24, 25.

De locorum sanctitate.

- piternum durot, sacerdotium habet ἀπαράστατον, de alio in alium non transiturum, adeoque illis sacerdotibus longè praestantiorem, qui
- Heb. vii. 23. plures ideo fuerunt, quòd morte prohiberentur
- viii. 2. permanere : sanctuarii hunc esse ministrum, verique illius tabernaculi, quod fixit Dominus, non homo : sacerdotes illos alteros exemplari atque umbrae rerum coelestium deseruisse ;
- ix. 8. vii. 8. viam autem sanctuarii nondum fuisse patefactam, quamdiu prius illud tabernaculum consisteret : necesse quidem fuisse, ut exempla eorum quae sunt in coelis victimis
- ix. 23, 24. illis lege constitutis purgarentur, ipsa autem coelestia potioribus sacrificiis ; ideoque Jesum non in manu factum sanctuarium fuisse ingressum, quod veri sanctuarii fuit ἀντίτυπον, sed in ipsum coelum, ut coram facie Dei pro nobis compareret. Atque huc respiciens in
- Apoc. xi. 19. sua ἀποκαλύψει Joannes ait, templum Dei in
- xv. 5. coelis fuisse apertum, ibique visam esse foederis ejus arcam : quum tamen de futuro illo novae Hierosolymae statu scribens, in quo scilicet Christi pontificis et mediatoris officium locum non sit habiturum, se nullum ibi templum vidisse dicat ; Deum autem ipsum atque agnum templum ejus fuisse affirmet, gloriamque Dei eam urbem illustrasse, ejusque lucernam fuisse agnum.

MANIFESTE igitur apparet, Christum Jesum, quum pontificis personâ indutus in coeleste sacrarium intraret, ibique sui sacrificii virtute coram Deo pro nobis compareret, omnem illam de templo terreno sanctitatem

sanctitatem sustulisse, quae ad sacrificia offerenda spectaret : eademque ratione constat, eam sanctitatem nulli loco terrestri fuisse translata.

ATQUE haec quidem de Jesu, pontificis personam induto. Eodem res redibit, si ipsum aliâ ratione, nimirum quatenus in eo Dei resideret gloria, consideremus. Certum est in novo instrumento Jesum dici *gloriae Dei splendorem, characterem τῆς αὐτῆς* Heb. i. 3. ὑποστάσεως, *imaginem inaspectabilis Dei, totamque divinitatis plenitudinem σωματικῶς* Col. i. 15. *in eo habitare* affirmari. Certum est, ipsum Christum corpus suum *templum* nuncupare. Ad propositum autem nostrum adhuc propiora sunt illa evangelistae verba : *Sermo caro factus est, et apud nos gratiae veritatisque plenus quasi in a tabernaculo habitavit ; ejusque gloriam, ut Unigenae a Patre gloriam, nos adspeximus.* Haec omnia videntur ad splendorem illum mirificum spectare, qui apud Israelitas *Jehovae gloria* vocabatur ; quique in templo a Solomone condito super arcam foederis, divinae praesentiae σύμβολον, residebat ; quem tamen non liquet post templum illud dirutum suam recepisse sedem, etsi ex Jehovae ipsius auctoritate templum alterum a Judaeis esset extructum, atque pro *ipsius β domo* habitum. Et rectè quidem templum illud instauratum *domus Jehovae* vocabatur,

F f 4. etiam si

α Ἐκλήνωσαν.

β Hag. i. 1---14. ii. 3, 4, 5.

etiam si aspectabilem illam gloriam in eo apparuisse non liqueat, quam in templo antiquo pro suae praesentiae signo ipse haberi voluit. Nondum enim cessaverat illa πολιτεία, in qua Jehova se populi Israelitici regem constituerat, sibi que adeo templum pro sua domo, hoc est, pro palatio regio vindicaverat. Quamdiu illa maneret πολιτεία, tamdiu debuisse templum pro regis Jehovae palatio atque domo agnosci certissimum est. Attamen quoniam ab hoc instaurato templo, (ut quidem maxime probabile est) deerat aspectabilis illa gloria; de Christo videntur esse intelligenda illa Jehovae ab Haggaeo vate memorata verba: *Istam*

Hag. ii. 7, 9.

aedem ego gloriā replebo; eritque major hujus posterioris aedis gloria quàm prioris; et in isto loco dabo pacem. Optimè enim haec cum iis congruunt, quae de Christo ex apostolorum scriptis modo attulimus: qui stante illo templo, atque saepissimè etiam in templo ipso, suam gloriam, descriptionibus istis consentaneam, demonstravit; non, veluti olim Shekina, corpoream quidem illam, aut terrori inservientem; at verò spiritua-lem, patris consiliis, cujus de sinu venerat, constitutam, quaeque cum veritate gratiam haberet, in peccatorum venia aeternaque felicitate promittenda, conjunctam. Quamquam autem Christi haec gloria saepissimè in templo fuerat demonstrata; constat tamen eam templi terminis non fuisse circumscriptam, sed per totam Judaeam, Samariam,

mariam atque Galilaeam permeavisse ; et siquam iis locis, saltem nullis aliis terrenis sanctitatem conciliaffe ; eamque omnem Jesum secum in coelestem suum aeternumque habitationis locum tandem sustulisse.

CAETERUM non opus est ut hisce longius inhaereamus. Constat enim ex evangelica constitutione ubivis gentium licere, in domo pariter privata, atque in aede publica, etiam in loco subdiali, coetus habere, ad mentem Dei explicandam, precesque et laudationes ipsi offerendas : unde fit, ut non tantum *quovis in loco supplicare*, ^{1 Tim. ii. 8.} *piasque manus attollere*, apostolus hortetur ; sed ut de *ecclesia* quoque in *Nymphae atque in Philemonis aedibus* audiamus. ^{Col. iv. 15. Philem. 2.} Ubi-cumque autem Deum colamus, aequum est ut quàm decentissimè nos geramus ; neque oculis, neque gestu quicquam admittamus, quod cum ea animi reverentia minùs conveniat, quae ipsi numini optimo jure debeatur. At verò reverentiam ejusmodi ulli jam loco terrestri esse adhibendam quo tempore Deus non colatur, quum liquidò constet templi sanctitatem, in quo Deus fuerat commoratus, in coelum fuisse translata ; illud quidem cum Christi mente aut doctrinae natura congruere, nullo usquam vestigio apparet.

SIQUIS omnino locus in *ὁικονομία* Christiana caeteris omnibus sanctior esset habendus ;

Actor. ii.

Luc. ix. 29,
32, 35.Mat. xvii. 2,
5.2 Pet. i. 17,
18.

habendus ; aut is esset, in quo Spiritus sanctus, die pentecostes, mirifico illo modo in apostolos descendit ; aut is certè, in quo Christus divinâ gloriâ vestitus apparuit, ei-
que testimonium a patre datum est, voce ad eum de coelo deque magnifica gloria delatâ. At quamvis B. Petrus montem illum hanc ob causam *sacrum* appellavit : de manente tamen aliqua sanctitate, quae honorem singularem isti monti, aut cultum aliquem Deo ibi ab hominibus propterea esse adhibendum requirat, nihil unquam Petro in mentem venisse, ex ipsius quidem scriptis apparet : praeterquam quòd quisnam hic mons fuerit, ut ipsum petere possimus, neque Petrus, neque Matthaeus, neque Marcus, neque Lucas indicavit ; qui tamen omnes eandem historiam scriptam reliquerunt. De altero illo loco, ubi Spiritus sanctus in apostolos descendit, idem dicendum. Quasi enim cavere Deus voluisset, nequid de ejus sanctitate suspicaremur ; ubinam is esset memoriae haud proditum fuit : id tantum dicitur, *eos omnes unum in locum fuisse congregatos.*

Actor. ii. 1.

NEQUE credibile est, ullam consecrationem ab hominibus factam locis terrenis eam posse sanctitatem conciliare, quae cum Christi constitutionis natura tam parum videatur congruere. Ideoque etsi saepe de *ecclesiis*, hoc est, christianorum coetibus, in *Judaea*, in *Galatia*, aliisque in locis

locis coactis audiamus, eisque nonnumquam *pace fruentibus* : nullus tamen, quod Aetor. ix. 31.
 sciam, locus aut consecratus dicitur, aut ita numini colendo dicatus, ut ei soli usui vacaret. Quod a rege Solomone in templo factum legimus, debere illud propterea a ministris christianis fieri, omnino non sequitur. Praeterquam enim quòd locorum terrestrium sanctitas evangelicae constitutioni non videatur esse accommodata; praeterquam quòd ipsa Solomonis consecratio nullam templo sanctitatem conciliare potuit, quae omnis ex *Jehovae gloriosa praesentia* et mandatorum auctoritate ei antea competit; manifestum est omnes consecrationes omnesque dedicationes de quibus in veteris instrumenti libris quicquam legimus, non a pontificibus non a sacerdotibus, sed ab aliis fuisse factas. Sic templum a rege Solomone atque a populo dedicatum : sic aedes privatae ab Deut. xx. 1-5. ipsarum incolis. De templo quidem disertis verbis dicitur, *illud a rege atque universo populo fuisse dedicatum, sacerdotibus interea suo munere fungentibus.* 2 Par. vii. 5, 6. At vero in templo sive dedicando sive consecrando, quid egit Solomon? Hostias nimirum, cum omni Israelitarum conventu, tum primum ibi Jehovae immolavit; quòd in illa aede commorari se velle fidem dedisset, ei gratias egit; atque ipsum oravit, uti preces
 in

in illo loco aut versus illum fundendas vellet propitius exaudire. Sic cum *medium atrium ante templum positum* ab eodem Solomone dicitur fuisse *consecratum* ; ea omnis *consecratio*, aut si ita loqui liceat, *sanctificatio*, in hoc manifestè constitit, quòd rex tum primum *holocausta atque adipēs eucharisticos ibi Deo offerri* curaverit. Idem a *populo*, post captivitatem Babylonicam, in templi instaurati dedicatione fuisse factum, testis est Esdras : qui et ipse sacerdos, *secundum* tamen sacerdotibus locum, *tertium* Levitis attribuit.

Ezr. vi. 16, 17.

Gen. xxviii.

Exod. iii.

Jof. v. 15.

VERUM haec omnia quid ad nos ? Esto, Jacobum eum locum *domum Dei* nuncupasse, in quo Jehova ipsi apparuerat. Esto, locum illum a Deo ipso *sacrum* fuisse dictum unde Mosi de rubo ardenti se ostendit ; atque ejus rei causâ Mosi fuisse mandatum ut *calceos de pedibus detraheret*. Esto, idem Josuae accidisse, quum *ipsi dux exercitus Jehovae in conspectum venit*. Esto, templum Hierosolymitanum *sacrum* fuisse propterea habitum, quòd *Jehova* ibi singulari quodam modo *habitare*, atque omnia Israelitarum *sacrificia coram se offerri* voluit. Esto, templum hocce victimis, laudationibus et precibus Deo oblatiis, a rege et populo fuisse solenniter dicatum : e templo instaurato Jesum numularios, boumque et ovium et columbarum venditores abegisse,

egisse, ne domum patris sui mercatoriam Joh. ii. 14, 15, domum facerent : atque in festo dedicatio-^{16.} nis, populi docendi causâ, qui ibi frequens x. 22, 23. aderat, in eodem templo ambulasse. Esto, denique, montem illum ab apostolo sacrum^{2 Pet. i. 17,} fuisse appellatum, in quo Christus gloriâ^{18.} vestitus apparuit. Ex hisce tamen nunquam effici poterit, vel locis istis, quos homines christiani ad simplicem illum cultum quem docuit Christus, aut idoneos repererint, aut etiam extruxerint, eam sanctitatem adhaerere, quâ ab aliis usibus eximantur, vel opus esse ut a sacerdote consecrentur ; praesertim cum christianâ constitutione aut nullus sit praeter ipsum Christum sacerdos, aut omnes christiani sint sacerdotes.

DICAT ergo in jure Romano Justinianus ;
 ‘ eas res esse sacras, quae ritè per pontifices
 ‘ Deo consecratae sunt, veluti aedes sacras,
 ‘ et donaria, quae ritè ad ministerium Dei
 ‘ dedicata sunt ; atque locum ipsum, in
 ‘ quo aedes sacrae sunt aedificatae, etiam
 ‘ diruto aedificio, sacrum adhuc manere.’
 Dicat in canonico jure Hyginus pontifex ;
 ‘ § omnes basilicas cum missa debere conse-
 ‘ crari.’ Jubeat concilium Aurelianense, ut
 ‘ n nequis ecclesiam aedificet, antequam
 ‘ episcopus civitatis veniat, et ibidem cru-
 ‘ cem figat ; et postquam consecrata fue-
 ‘ rit domus, ut atrium ejusdem ecclesiae
 sanctâ

§ Instit. de rer. div. § 8.
 l. c. 3. n c. 9.

§ Decr. par. iii. dist.

‘ sanctâ aquâ episcopus conspergat.’ Jubeat Felix papa, ^θ ‘ solennitates dedicationum ecclesiarum, episcoporum et sacerdotum, per singulos annos solenniter celebrari : et quoties de ecclesiarum consecratione dubitetur, eas jubeat absque ulla dubitatione consecrari.’ Quaerendum nobis est, non quid jure civili Romani, non quid canonico pontifices et concilia ; sed quid Christus statuerit, quidque naturae illius doctrinae quam is docuit maximè sit consentaneum. Ideoque ut altaria adoremus, quum de altari terreno Christi evangelium nihil quicquam agnoscat ; útve ad orientalem potius quam ad ullam aliam coeli plagam conversi Deum colamus, quum ejus rei occasio, Israelitis propria, jamdiu cessaverit ; rationem omnino nullam cernimus.

SED haec relinquamus, quae ad hominum auctoritatem spectant. Constat enim, quicquid ab ipso Deo, sive de locis sive de rebus sacris, per temporum necessitates fuerit unquam statutum ; ipsi tamen, quippe omnium sapientissimo pariter ac sanctissimo, semper interiorem animi cultum, atque cum illo congruentem vitae sanctimoniam, multò magis placuisse, quam ullam quamcumque in rebus exterioribus religionis speciem.

HUJUS rei exemplum, ex ipsis fere re-
rum

rum primordiis repetitum, praestat Hebelis Cainique historia. In qua, utrum sacrificia fuerint tum temporis instituta nec ne, illud tamen constat: *justo Hebeli testimonium a Deo fuisse datum, quàm ipsi esset ejus munus acceptum; Cainum autem ejusque munus Deum non respexisse; cui, quod bene non egisset, peccatum prae foribus excubaret.* Interea nihil erat in Caini munere, quod per se Deo displiceret; in Hebelis nihil, quod per se esset gratum: atqui alter compositum illud jus fasque animi arae admovebat, a quibus alter prorsus alienus ideolitare non potuit.

ATQUE huic exemplo concordant tot insignia divinae mentis testimonia, Dei ipsius verbis expressa, ut eorum nonnulla nequeam non recitare. Hujus generis illud est, quod memorat Osea. *Quid tibi faciam, o Ephraim? quid tibi faciam, o Juda?* Ose. iv. 4, 5, 6.
quorum benignitas tanquam nubes matutina et veluti ros mane stillans abeat! Propterea caecidi per prophetas, interfeci istos sermonibus oris mei; et judiciorum tuorum lux exorta est: me scilicet misericordiâ delectari, non autem sacrificio, et cognitione Dei magis quam holocaustis. Nec aliud sibi vult illud ab Amoso dictum: in quo ritus ab se institutos, propterea quòd Israelitae jus illud atque justitiam negligerent, quae per se bona sunt et propter se accepta, odio esse habitos Deus declarat. *Odi, sperno dies vestros festos, neque ferias* Am. v. 21.
vestras

De locorum sanctitate.

Esa. i. 10-20.

Jer. vii. 21.

vestras olfacio. Et quamvis mihi holocausta et munera obmoveatis, ea non habebō accepta, neque eucharisticum pinguium vestrorum intuebor. Removete de me canticorum vestrorum turbam: melos nabliorum vestrorum non audiam. Sed fluat tanquam aqua jus; et justitia ut torrens validus. Similia per Esaiam vatem Deus testatur; Judaicumque populum populum Gomorrhitanum, ejusque principes Sodomaē principes ideo vocat, quod impuro essent corde atque vitâ, quum tamen eos maximam ad caeremonias conferre diligentiam agnoscat. Imo, quae per se bona sunt, adeo erant Deo prae caeremoniis accepta; ut per Jeremiam prophetam se illa externa neget instituisse, quae ab ipso fuisse instituta certissimum est: quod scilicet notum faceret, se ea non principi loco jussisse observanda; constat enim ea per comparisonem hic esse intelligenda, quae, ex Hebraeorum consuetudine, per negationem exprimantur. Sed verba ipsa audiamus: Sic ait Jehova exercituum, Deus Israelis: holocausta vestra adjicite ad sacrificia vestra, et carnem comedite. Nec enim dixi aut praecepi majoribus vestris, cum eos ex Aegypto educerem, de re holocausti aut sacrificii. Sed eis hanc rem praecepi: auscultate voci meae; et ego vobis Deus, et vos mihi eritis populus. Omnium autem notissimum est illud Michae; quo enumeratis multis ritibus, partim ab hominibus inventis,

inventis, partim a Deo institutis, eam optimam esse Deum adeundi rationem ostendit, quae a caeremoniis non pendeat. *Indicavit tibi, o homo, quid bonum sit: ecquid abs te Jehova requisivit, nisi ut aequum facias, ut ames benignitatem, utque erga Deum tuum summissè te geras?* Mic. vi. 8.

HAEC sunt quae veteris instrumenti scripta suppeditant; eaque ut plurimum ex umbratili illa Mosaiica constitutione desumpta. In religione verò christiana, quae ritualis generis perparum quicquam continet, res eadem clariori adhuc luce effulget. Haud igitur mirandum est, scribas et Phariseos a Christo *hypocritas* fuisse appellatos, iramque Dei eis denunciatam, quòd *mentham, anethum atque cuminum decimarent, omissis illis quae in lege essent graviora, scilicet jure, misericordià et fide; quòd dum culicem percolarent, camelum deglutirent; quod poculi etiam patinaeque partem exteriorem purgarent, quum ea intus rapinà atque intemperantià essent referta*: haud mirandum est, in improbis istis hominibus vituperandis alias hujusmodi comparationes Christum instituisse, quibus quantum ea quae per se sint bona caeteris omnibus anteponenda sint demonstraret. Haec, inquam, non est ut miremur; quum constet Christi universam doctrinam vitaeque rationem eò collineasse, ut homines a pravis cupiditatibus ac

G g moribus

De locorum sanctitate.

moribus abrepti ad haec bona perducerentur ; quum constet ipsius miracula eo fine fuisse peracta, uti certum fieret, eum qui adeo diligenter homines ad pietatis justitiae atque benevolentiae studium adducere laboraret, Dei auctoritate fuisse praeditum, adeoque ejus doctrinâ atque exemplo homines a Deo ipso ad hoc studium esse invitatos ; quumque etiam constet, Christum eodem fine mortem oppetiisse, ejusque mortem eò rectâ spectare, ut homines ad sanctissimae illius doctrinae amorem allicerentur, quae ipsi proxima fuit mortis occasio. Hinc igitur mortem Christi cum doctrinae ejus natura, et aeterna felicitate illic proposita, sequentibus verbis Paulus apostolus elegantissimè conjungit. *Illuxit*

Tit. ii. 11--14.

divina beneficentia, cunctis hominibus salutaris : quae nos erudiat ut impietati mundanisque cupiditatibus valedicto, sobriè et justè pièque vivamus in hoc seculo ; expectantes beatam illam spem, illustremque adventum magni Dei, et servatoris nostri Jesu Christi ; qui seipsum pro nobis dedit, quò nos ab omni iniquitate redimeret, sibiique peculiarem populum purificaret, bonorum operum studiosum.

QUAM haec aptè cum iis conveniunt, quae Christus ipse declaravit, cum diceret ;
 Mat. v. 17. *Non se ideo venisse ut legem aut prophetas dissolveret, sed ut impleret ; ejus autem doctrinae quae a lege et prophetis doceretur summam*

summam esse, ut Deum nosque mutuo diligamus ? Quàm accuratè haec Christi ver- Mat. xxii. 37
---40.

ba doctrinae ab ipso traditae respondent ! Quàmque esset optandum, velle omnes Christi discipulos considerare, quanta pars ejus doctrinae, quam a Christo fuisse traditam evangelistae affirmant, in iis rebus manifestè versetur, quae per se sint bona ; quibusque rationibus ad hominum animos eò flectendos Christus uteretur ! Tum faciliè viderent, non modo paucas illas caeremonias quas ipse instituit, eo consilio fuisse institutas, ut rebus gravioribus inferirent ; sed vel ea quae ad Christi divinam dignitatem auctoritatemque spectent, caeteraque omnia quae christianae doctrinae sint propria, ideo a Christo fuisse tradita, ut eorum consideratione homines ad animi morumque sanctimoniam ducerentur. Qua ratione demonstravit, quàm illud verum sit ; *Dei filium ideo fuisse paterfactum, ut diaboli opera aboleret ;* quàmque meritò ipse *Jesus* ab angelo esset appellatus, *qui populum suum a peccatis esset liberaturus.*

1 Joh. iii. 8.

Mat. i. 21.

QUONIAM igitur ut vobis admonitoris essem loco visum est, cui opus sit ut a vobis admonear ; illud unum, reverendi patres, fratres carissimi, vos oro atque obtestor, ut Christum ipsum in populo docendo velitis imitari. Si Dei filius, cum de coelo in terram venit, ut hominibus viam

ad coelestem beatitudinem monstraret, adeo multus fuit in iis docendis quae manifestè per se sint bona; sique reliquam omnem suam doctrinam huc referri voluit: videamus nos, qui ipsius doctrinam docere profitemur, ne in iisdem rebus segnes simus aut rari. Siquid apud nos valet Christi exemplum; siquid finis, quem spectabant ejus et vita, et doctrina, et miracula, et mors, et resurrectio; denique tota regni ab eo constituti ratio: in iis quae ad homines revera meliores reddendos faciant, operam praecipuè navabimus. At videamus etiam, ut eadem ad persuadendum ratione utamur, qua Christum novimus fuisse usum; ne philosophorum potius quam Christi nos esse discipulos probemus. Laudabile est quidem, quia utile, ut quemadmodum hominum officia cum ipsa rerum natura congruant atque ab ipsa pendeant, argumentis ex naturae lege depromptis, nonnunquam commonstremus. Cumque manifestum sit, quidquid pietatis aut virtutis loco haberi possit, illud omne nobis per christianam doctrinam esse commendatum; fieri non potest quin hic labor in illius doctrinae honorem cedat. Attamen non opus est ut ea semper laboriosius probemus, quae hominum mentibus insita probatione non egeant. Neque facilè dici potest, quantum sit periculi ne in fictiles philosophorum
subti-

subtilitates incidamus, si, relicto Christi exemplo, id potissimum agamus, ut probabiliter de virtute ac felicitate disputetur. Certum est, primaria hominum, tum ergo Deum tum inter se mutua officia, ratione ipsis esse nota. Certum est etiam, magistrum illum nostrum Jesum Christum per universam suam doctrinam hoc sibi pro concessio sumpsisse; atque hinc ad auditorum mentes provocasse. Scilicet id egit: ut quae hominum mentes quantumvis debilitatae nequirent tamen pro bonis non agnoscere, ea, testimoniorum ope, quibus multis et maximis fuit ornatus, Patri esse gratissima ab eoque remuneranda demonstraret: contra autem, quae etiam si affectibus grata nequirent tamen non pro malis ducere, ea ipsi jam displicere, atque olim judiciali modo cum poenae irrogatione fore damnanda. Hac ratione, non modo ad consuetudinem vitiosam et corruptam emendandam, sed ad mentis etiam errores multos removendos, viam paravit. Atqui haec omnia fidei ope effecit: quae tamen, nisi summa doctrinae quam docuit sese auditorum animis approbasset, efficere non potuisset.

Hoc interea certum est; Christum, quum apud populum verba faceret, eorum mentes semper ad summi illius rectoris approbationem direxisse, cujus in rebus creandis constitutio omnium officiorum est

fundamentum, quae aut ipsi Deo aut inter nos mutuò debeantur. Sic in copiosa illa et pulcherima argumentatione, quam de thesauris in coelo reponendis, et anxia solitudine amovenda, habuit: sic in beatitudinibus promittendis, ac lege divina a perverfis interpretationibus vindicanda: sic denique in universa illa quam de monte pronuntiavit oratione peroranda, si quidem ea omnia uno tempore sunt dicta. Etenim si quid priùs in ea oratione dictum non huc manifestè referri forsàn videatur: sub finem ut id fiat, disertis verbis cautum est; quum *neminem in regnum coelorum esse intraturum Iesus firmissimè asseveret, nisi qui Patris sui coelestis voluntatem fecerit.*

CHRISTI exemplum ejus apostoli sunt secuti. Etenim quam is doctrinam docuerat, ipsis a suscitato magistro divinoque Spiritu explicatiùs enarratam, populo tradiderunt; quibusque testimoniis eam Dei esse mentem liqueret, demonstrarunt. Quamvis autem de hujus doctrinae puritate et ipsi quoque ad hominum mentes provocarent; quum tamen de summa ejus religionis quam a Christo acceperant ageretur, eam omnem in fide fundarunt. Sic, qui religionem christianam optimè callebat, et in politiori literatura non minimus, in rerum autem cognitione inter summos erat, Paulus apostolus, se propterea in ea religione gloriari affirmat, quòd ejus omnis salutaris

salutaris effectus non philosophorum rationationibus aut artibus oratorum, sed fidei solum fit attribuendus. Illud enim planè per μέωον significat, ita loquens: *Non me* Rom. i. 16, 17. *pudet evangelii Christi; quippe quòd sit Dei potentia ad salutem cuiusvis credenti, Judaeo primum, tum etiam Graeco: justitia enim Dei per illud retegatur ex fide in fidem; quemadmodum scriptum est, Justus autem ex fide vivet.* At haec ad Romanos Paulus nunquam scripsisset, quae civitas tot claris oratoribus et philosophis floreret, quorum auctoritate ductus ut plurimum populus doctrinae christianae simplicitatem in despicientia habuit, nisi illud certum fuisset; hanc spargendae illius doctrinae rationem a Deo fuisse electam, ut quae aliis omnibus longè foret efficacior. Similia ad Corinthios, Graeciae civitatem, philosophis etiam atque oratoribus abundantem, ab eodem apostolo fusiùs sunt scripta: quae, ne taedium pariant, silentio praeteribo. 1 Cor. i. 18--31.

ILLUD autem praeterire nequeo; quàm sapienter haec a Deo constituta fuerint, quantoque nostro commodo eâ ratione fuerit consultum. Etenim certum est, fidem in Deo positam, (qualis est evangelica) divinâ auctoritate instructam, rectâ celeriterque ad animum penetrare, ibique in omnis generis hominibus, sive doctis sive indoctis, fortiter agere: quum interea rationationes illae, quibus officia omnia nostra

nostra ex naturae lege repetuntur, non modo vim suam lentius exerant, sed partim per ingenii tarditatem, partim per vitae necessitates, nonnisi paucis hominibus usueniant. Neque credibile est, Deum de sinu suo Filium, tot tantisque testimoniis ornatum, ad voluntatem suam docendam mittere voluisse; nisi in evangelio praedicando fide potissimum cum hominibus agi placuisset. Quapropter nobis semper expectandum est, ut Christi religionem tum demum optimo cum effectu doceamus, quum nostrae militiae armis ita utamur, ut *omnes cogitationes in ejus obedientiam captivas reddere conemur.*

2 Cor. x. 5.

ILLUD igitur nos agamus: ut in iis potissimum quae per se bona sint doctrina nostra versetur; utque quemadmodum ea per christianam constitutionem nobis sint commendata demonstretur. Doctrinam vitae sanctimoniâ adornemus: illud ante omnia caventes, ne ea quae maximi esse momenti praedicemus, pravis nostris moribus in hominum contemptionem veniant: alioquin et frustra in docendo laborabimus, et nostram conditionem omnium deterrimam faciemus. Acerbissimus enim is erit nostri ministerii finis, *si cum alios docuerimus, ipsi finis rejectanei.* Ad caeremonias quod attinet: quodcumque hujus generis a Deo nobis esse imperatum constiterit, illud servandum esse doceamus; quippe

3 Cor. ix. 27.

quippe quibus certum fit, Deum benevolentissimum pariter ac sapientissimum nihil quicquam posse a nobis exigere, nisi quod et nostram deceat conditionem, et rebus nostris aliquo modo sit utile. Quem autem locum ea tenere debeant quae ritualis sunt generis ; quemque ea, quae *legis divinae graviora* Magister ipse noster appellavit ; indicio fit ipsius regula, nobis semper ob oculos ponenda : *haec scilicet oportere nos facere, illa* Mat. xxiii. 23. *autem non omittere.*

F I N I S.



H h

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